

FIGURING IT OUT: METAPHOR AND AGENCY IN HENRY JAMES'S NEW
YORK EDITION

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This dissertation examines how metaphor works in Henry James's fiction to endow his characters, narrators, and readers with a specific kind of creative agency. The prefaces to the novels and stories in the New York Edition of James's works highlight and demonstrate the role of strategically structured and coordinated metaphors in generating this agency. The prefaces also point out how James's ability to use metaphors evolved over the course of his career. While I trace the work of metaphor in a number of James's works, I focus my study on three structurally and thematically related novels.

In my first chapter I establish *The American* as a starting point for developments that span the length of James's career. The preface to this novel suggests that Christopher Newman can't secure a bride because he can't effectively imagine and represent human relations. It also demonstrates that the young James fails to write a realist novel for exactly the same reason. *The American* introduces a set of thematic and technical challenges directly addressed in *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl*.

The second chapter details how the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* employs metaphors to re-enter and re-orient the action of the novel. The prefacer structures the story of the novel's creation so that it matches Isabel Archer's story in the novel. He then overlays a set of organic metaphors that envelop both stories, loosen the grip of their mystical and architectural metaphors, and give Isabel and the novel a brighter

future. Simultaneously, the prefacer demonstrates that metaphors can cross boundaries between texts and narrative levels.

In the third chapter I show that the skills demonstrated by the prefacer have been incorporated into the action and narration of *The Golden Bowl*. Princess Maggie herself acquires agency by strategically using metaphors to conceptualize and modify her relations with others. The narrator situates the metaphors so that their attribution and extension is ambiguous, ceding agency as he offers them to readers for interpretation.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Hasse, known to family and friends as “Ricardo,” was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and after moving to the United States at a young age, was raised in rural eastern Washington State. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Washington and his Master of Arts from Cornell University.

To Katie

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Am</i>	<i>The American</i>
<i>Amb</i>	<i>The Ambassadors</i>
<i>AN</i>	<i>The Art of the Novel</i>
<i>GB</i>	<i>The Golden Bowl</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i>

Note on citations:

Paranthetical references to James's prefaces are keyed to both *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, New York Edition, 26 volumes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907-1909) cited by volume number in italics and page number in Roman Type, and to *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James*, ed. Richard P. Blackmur (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), abbreviated as *AN* and cited by page number.

References to James's fiction are to the New York Edition. Novels that occupy two volumes are cited by volume number one or two, followed by the page number.

PREFACE

I began this study as an inquiry into how metaphors function in Henry James's novels, an inquiry that still anchors and structures the whole dissertation. However, in order to develop a satisfactory understanding of this subject, I had to expand it in some unexpected directions. As I sought to clarify the dynamics of the central conflict in *The Portrait of a Lady*, between Isabel Archer and Gilbert Osmond, through some close readings of the metaphors used to illustrate it, I turned to the preface written by James for the 1907 New York Edition of the novel. I was looking there for some critical commentary on those metaphors, or for some useful discussion of the conflict itself, but what I found was more interesting and more challenging.

I found, worked into the preface's story of how the younger James conceived the idea for the novel and developed it into its final form, another set of opposed metaphors that correspond to those inside the novel. This correspondence illuminated a more general correspondence between the story told in the novel and the story told in the preface about the creation of the novel. Isabel Archer's romantic ideas about her self and her future are matched by the young James's romantic ideas about his initial vision for the novel and its composition. The ironic stance of the novel's narrator toward Isabel's ideas is matched by the prefacer's ironic stance toward the ideas of his younger self. The similarities between the two stories, in structure, imagery and narrative stance, encouraged a comparative analysis.

The initial result of this analysis was to strengthen the idea that *The Portrait of a Lady* is either a tragedy or a problem novel that can't effectively deal with the conflicts it generates. In the preface's story of how James began the novel, the young author tries to protect the purity of his initial vision from the plotting structures that would imprison it. The novel itself shows that this effort was doomed, as Isabel

Archer's character is built into a rather rigid plot structure. The prefacer highlights this failure through his ironic treatment of the young author's aspirations and through repeated digressions into graphic architectural metaphors for the narrative structure eventually built around the initial feminine vision. This treatment of the story in the preface reinforces the idea that Isabel's wish to expand her consciousness without societal constraints is foolishly idealistic, and that her eventual imprisonment in a confining marriage is as inevitable as her character's confinement in a plot. As such her story would have to be considered a tragedy.

The problem is that if Isabel's story is a tragedy, it is a tragedy without a conclusive end. There is also considerable evidence to suggest that at the end of the novel she is on a path to success. There are clear suggestions, by the narrator and characters, that Isabel is going to be just fine. In addition, though the story in the preface highlights the fact that Isabel's quest, like the young author's, is misguided, it also carries the suggestion that her story doesn't end in failure. Though the young author's initial vision will never escape the constraints of a plot, the novel itself can't be considered a failure. At this point, a comparison of the story in the preface with the story in the novel only highlights the essential dilemmas already present in most critical discussions of the novel.

The prefacer resolves the dilemma by introducing another set of metaphors that enable a rereading of both stories. These organic metaphors – seeds, germination, growth, flowering – work to envelop and incorporate the statically opposed metaphor sets such as vision/structure, individual/group, female/male and expansion/containment, so that they are oriented and connected to a past and a future. These organic metaphors work most proximately with the story in the preface, suggesting that the ambitions of the young author and the results of that ambition are part of a longer continuum connected to a larger literary world that includes earlier

and later works. As such, the local contradictions achieve meaning and resolution through their relations with the other stories and tales.

The organic metaphors are part of an alternative account of the novel's creation that is interwoven with the account of how the young author tries to save his vision from imprisonment in structure. The organically-figured account thus works quite immediately and obviously to locate and orient the other story. However, the new story can extend its influence beyond the preface and into the novel because of the correspondence between the young author's and Isabel's stories. Transferring the effects of the organically-figured creation story to Isabel's story produces a shift in how one reads the story itself, and a shift in the novel's relation to James's other works.

While the metaphors of mystical vision and enclosing architecture serve to highlight the static quality of the conflict between Isabel and Osmond, the organic metaphors introduce ideas of origination, growth, change, and cycles of generation. Thinking in these terms encourages a move away from the young Isabel's very compelling conception of herself as self-created, and toward information about where she comes from and why she thinks like she does. This information, in turn, suggests possibilities for change, and highlights clues later in the novel about how Isabel is actually changing her ideas and her situation. The Isabel that emerges at the end of this line of thought is in no way tragic. Though she has been through some trying experiences, at the end of the novel she is positioned to deal creatively and constructively with her life in Rome.

The organic metaphors, coming as they do from the preface, from outside the novel, also invite a conception of the novel as part of a larger organic whole. The incompleteness of the novel, most clearly expressed by the ending that doesn't tell us why Isabel is going back to Rome or what might happen to her there, can be

reconsidered as an opening toward later works in which more complete resolution may be found. The novel acquires meaning through its connections with James's other novels and tales.

The prefacer uses the coordinated sets of metaphors to reenter the novel and regain agency within the representational dynamic. The story of the novel's creation, synchronized with Isabel's story, works as a bridge for the organic metaphors to cross the line between the dimension of the preface and that of the novel. The organic metaphors can then work directly with the imagery and discourse within the novel to expand the horizon of possible readings. The prefacer claims no special right to engage the novel in this way. He admits that his memories are limited and flawed, and he grounds the organically-figured account in his own rereading of the novel and in his ideas about how the creative process works. The agency that the prefacer demonstrates, as he uses these metaphors to reach through time and across the boundaries between narrative dimensions, is thus available to anyone who wishes to creatively engage the novel. The result is that the novel is opened up to a potentially endless return, a succession of new readings and reorientations.

Understanding the interaction between preface and novel in this way can also change the discussion about how the prefaces relate to the novels and stories throughout the New York Edition. Early valorations of the New York Edition as a literary monument, and of the prefaces as the last word on James's mastery, have given way in recent decades to critiques that unmask the prefaces as anxious attempts to suture and paste together a disparate and disconnected set of texts. If one can use the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* as an indicator, one can argue that, yes, the prefacer is deeply invested in maintaining an ongoing voice in the discourse about the meaning and valuation of his works, but that he is willing to forego ultimate authority

in the matter. He opens the door to an ongoing participation in the production of meaning which was initiated when the stories were written.

The preface to *The Golden Bowl* contains some of the same features as does the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, such as a technical discussion of the novel's structure and narrative point of view, but it doesn't construct a bridge into the novel the way that the earlier preface does. Instead, the prefacer refers the reader to the novel itself, which is full of metaphors that are doing some of the same kind of work the metaphors in the earlier preface do. The protagonist, Maggie, who is originally stuck in a dilemma not unlike Isabel Archer's, uses metaphors to refigure and ultimately alter her situation. She doesn't need the assistance of the prefacer to understand her situation and generate agency for herself.

The effectiveness of metaphors in generating agency derives from their two-part structure. When one uses a metaphor it serves not only to illuminate or deepen understanding of its referent, it extends that understanding more or less unpredictably. This unpredictability is the feature of metaphor that enables change. At the same time, the unpredictability prevents the user of metaphor from acquiring outright power. What results is agency, which is contingent on the interplay of all the other factors involved in the situation.

In *The Golden Bowl* Maggie uses metaphors to understand her situation and to incite change. Her approach is contrasted with that of her rival, Charlotte. Maggie watches the effects of the changes she makes, and then reconfigures her approach based on her observations. Her quest is to restore her marriage; her guiding principles are her own integrity and the well-being of her family circle. She regularly questions her motives and actions. The precise form that her desires will take is never known in advance, as it is contingent on the unpredictable effects of every reconfiguration. I use the term "management" to refer to her approach so as to distinguish it from Charlotte's

approach, which I call “policing.” Charlotte grounds her approach in a belief that she is right, that she is justified in her actions, and that her conduct is already determined by her circumstances. Though she initially gains power over Maggie, and convinces the Prince to engage in an affair, her approach is ultimately too inflexible. It depends on Maggie’s submission, and can’t adapt to the changes in her knowledge and tactics.

The metaphors that Maggie uses to change her situation also work to bridge the barriers between narrative dimensions, though the mechanism is different from that in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. In *The Golden Bowl*, many of the metaphors that Maggie uses are narrated so that they can’t be wholly attributed to her or to the narrator. This ambiguity invites a reader to decide what Maggie knows, and to what extent she is in charge of her situation based on how involved she is in creating and applying the metaphors. Since so much of the novel’s action is dependent on who knows what and when they know it, the reader gets to participate in creating the shifting field of interpersonal power. In addition, because the reader is allowed to negotiate the extent to which Maggie is aware of her own metaphors, he can determine the narrative distance and irony. Thus, the reader gains an unusual degree of agency in the process of determining meaning in the novel.

A comparison of how metaphor is working to create agency in *The Portrait of a Lady* and in *The Golden Bowl* suggests, of course, the idea that there is some development from one novel to the next. Within the novels, Maggie is more skilled than Isabel at understanding and working with her dilemma. By the end of *The Portrait of a Lady* Isabel may know what she is going to do, but by the end of *The Golden Bowl* Maggie has already achieved her ends. The narrator of the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* has to reach in and weave another layer into the story, while *The Golden Bowl* takes care of its own business. The preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* demonstrates how the novel is available for rereading, while *The Golden Bowl*

invites a reader into the process of making meaning in real time. At all these levels the later novel demonstrates advancements in technique.

I sought confirmation of the idea that these techniques developed over James's career by turning to a very early novel with many of the structural and thematic characteristics of the other two. I found that *The American* does indeed represent a clear starting point for the development carried out through *The Portrait of a Lady* and into *The Golden Bowl*. In *The American*, Christopher Newman attempts a marriage and fails. He is utterly rebuffed and achieves no functional understanding of his situation. The preface, interestingly, sets up a correspondence between the story of the novel's creation and the story in the novel, but it provides no additional story and no set of coordinated metaphors to enable new access to the interior of the novel. Thus, though the development of these techniques can be traced through a number of stories and novels – most notably “The Turn of the Screw,” “In the Cage,” *What Maisie Knew*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Ambassadors* – the preface to *The American* highlights that novel as a zero point for the later developments.

It is clear that one of the primary purposes of these prefaces is to illuminate this thread of development and to demonstrate the techniques being developed in the novels. Metaphor is thus revealed as a richer and a more significant force in James's fiction. It functions as an elemental and adaptable engine of creativity and agency. It works within the stories as a tool for understanding and managing social situations and it works to cross the boundaries between action, narration, and reading. It invests character, narrator, and arguably, readers, with agency – the freedom to move beyond otherwise inhibiting limits.

Figuring Inability: Not Getting It in *The American*

Henry James frames the preface to *The American*, like most of the New York Edition prefaces, as an autobiographical account of the novel's conception and composition. In the preface he recalls the worries, "hauntings and alarms," about not being able to keep up with the schedule of serialization – he remembers, as well, his youthful enthusiasm, confessing that he "was more than commonly enamoured of [his] idea" (2 vi; AN 20, 21). This approach generates an amiable, low-pressure mood and creates a convenient space in which he can lay out his critical assessments and relate the work at hand to the rest of the collection. *The American* and many of the other works included in the Edition were composed in stages while James wandered along his usual seasonal paths between London and Rome, and so the prefaces recall to some extent the relaxed tone of his early travel narratives. The prefaces invite the reader to join the author in his cosmopolitanism and to share with the master the secrets of the workshop as he divulges his inspirations, difficulties, successes and failures. Conceived as framing devices, the autobiographical, narrative elements of the prefaces are distinguishable from the more "serious" elements – the elements that give the prefaces their formidable reputation as a critical manifesto, as one of the founding texts of the modern critical tradition. Richard Blackmur, in his introduction to the collected New York Edition prefaces, calls these autobiographical elements the "face of a Preface," and by referring to their superficiality distinguishes them from what he sees as more interesting, profound, technical and theoretical elements (AN x).

To think of these autobiographical elements as the congenial frame, or as the most superficial level of the text, is to assume that they have been assigned rather light rhetorical duty. To assume this is to make a mistake with far-reaching results. Not only would one be foregoing an understanding of how these prefaces function in

relation to the fictions they represent, but one would be committing oneself to a basic misconception about the relations between structure and meaning, between surface and depth in James's representational dynamic. Blackmur's move, to marginalize the narrative discourse in the prefaces while privileging what are more obviously technical and theoretical discourses, has been central in producing a conception of the prefaces that works more to underpin critical ideologies and less to understand the dynamics of Jamesian texts and the work of fictional representation in general.

I do not mean to deny that the autobiographical elements, what Blackmur calls the "story of a story," in the prefaces really are engaged in the relatively light work of giving the reader a historical connection to the work, of building a bridge between the mutual historical reality – the reality that author and reader share – and the structural dimensions of the fictions (AN x). With this bridge, James is establishing a sympathy that can support his critical claims. In the case of the preface to *The American*, James takes the reader into his confidence before he advances his ideas about the differences between, and the proper uses of, romantic and realist approaches to fiction. This is an interesting, if fairly obvious, rhetorical function of these narratives, but it is not their only, nor their most important, function. When James structures the prefaces as narratives, he can set them up – through a repetition of themes, narrative ordering, and especially metaphorical figures – in a homological relation to the fictions they represent.¹ Anthropologists have, for some time, been aware of the usefulness of homologies in creating and understanding relations between otherwise inconsistent dimensions of cultural experience. Adi Hastings, for instance, has argued that Vedic ritual establishes a homological "system of equations," that structurally binds together

¹ I use the term "relation" to describe dynamic, structured interactions between a wide variety of subjects in this study. I choose it not only because it is the term James uses, but also because the term "relationship" suggests a more permanent state of being and most often refers only to human interactions. I follow James in using the term "relation" much more widely. One important effect of using this more general term is to bring the realms of life and art closer together.

Sanskrit grammar, history, future, as well as microscopic and macroscopic realms (Hastings 275). The ritual functions as a rhetorical strategy as it implicitly argues for a connection between these dimensions. Barry Brummett has formalized the rhetorical functions of homological structures in a “method of rhetorical homologies” (Brummett 449). He uses this method heuristically to read within and together such disparate cultural phenomena as the 2002 cult film, *The Ring*, Walter Benjamin’s 1936 essay, “The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” and “the experience of capital” (Brummett 449, 457, 466). His critical approach is not in itself unique – it is, in essence, classically structuralist – but his exposition of that approach, his explanation of the structure of the homological method, can enable a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of similar methodologies operating in the New York Edition.

Brummett argues that a homology is not only exceptionally useful in revealing discursive structures across “wide ranges of discourse and experience,” but that it works in both directions, as “an explanatory device for each member of the set,” and as a tool for understanding “the rhetorical work done by their shared form” (Brummett 453, 454). These features of homologies and of a homological approach will be very useful in understanding the special relations between the three texts and their three prefaces that I will be analyzing in the following pages. My own approach in this study will differ from that of Brummett and others primarily because the scope of the subject at hand is limited to the self-collected works of one author. While structuralist approaches to otherwise unrelated cultural phenomena must, to be relevant, posit some underlying “theory of what it is that generates the formal resemblance,” a study limited to the works of one author already has at hand, if not an actual author, at least what Foucault described as an “author-function” (Brummett 454, Foucault 143). Whether one understands it as a biographical author, a function partaking jointly of

reading experience and expectation, or a multiplicity of author-functions, it all bears the name “Henry James.” These texts have already been brought together and bound into one set by the prefacer, and so relations between them are already irretrievably assumed. The prefacer generates an intertextually active intentionality that can’t be theorized away. A study of these texts begins not with the fact that they are related, but with the quality and degree of their relations.

One does not have to be an exceptionally experienced reader of James to notice that, from work to work, he repeats plot structures, themes, character types and motifs. These homological relations engender several effects. A primary effect is the enhancement of the idea that one is dealing with the work of a unitary author. The continuity of structural and discursive elements suggests an individual’s continuity of experience, and thus a reader can more readily recognize the author from work to work than she might in another oeuvre. Another effect, encountered at perhaps a more critical level of engagement, is the recognition of thematic development, of a progressive study of a particular subject through narrative exposition. One can, for instance, once one has recognized the “international theme,” compare the differing ways that the New World encounters the Old across many works. A third effect is the idea that one is encountering not only continuity, but development. The various homologies highlight a progression of differences, and thus encourage ideas about the development, or deterioration, of James’s style.

Any preface, by virtue of its structurally articulated relation to the work it represents, highlights that work’s unity and completeness. A preface temporally frames a work; written after and placed before, it separates the work from and connects it to its historical context. The New York Edition prefaces, by their very existence as a series composed for an edition of collected works, posit authorial unity. Thematically, as well, they support these ideas about unity, continuity, and

development in both the series and the individual works. At the same time, because the relations between the prefaces and the fictions, between the fictions, and between levels in the fictions, are structured as homologies, one can read texts through other texts – generating what Bakhtin called “heteroglossia,” or “a dialogue of languages,” a centrifugal, unpredictable and very productive dynamic in any historically-situated discursive event (Bakhtin 294, 295). The heuristic potential of these homological structures is magnified through the inescapable intentionality generated by the narrator of the prefaces. The intentionality is further intensified when one takes into account that not only have the prefaces been designed to homologically relate to fictions written years before, but the fictions have been revised in ways that also directly support the homological relation between them and the prefaces. The text of *The Portrait of a Lady*, for instance, has been revised to accentuate Isabel Archer’s romantic and physical desires. These revisions help to reinforce the preface’s suggestion that she is perhaps more physically and socially constructed than she initially thinks she is.

While an anthropological study or a cultural critique has only the structural logic of the homologies on which to rest its conclusions, here in the New York Edition one can refer to the prefacing narrator who is saying, “Look how I did this. Look how this is like that. Look what happens when I do this.” The narrative structure of the prefaces locates them and the work they represent in space and time, and creates possibilities for homological relations between them. The already-declared intentionality of the prefacer enacts and drives the ultimately unpredictable dialogue between texts and between levels of discourse in those texts. The radical productivity produced by these structural repetitions makes it impossible to fix or foreclose on meaning – one can only triangulate, or more accurately, “quadrangulate,” in space and time and thus generate meaning tied to specific textual and reading events. This

homologically-enabled heteroglossia, as it reaches across narrative boundaries, makes this fiction available, through an extension of its repetitive structures, to the reader's experiential dimension.

The homological layering would be enough to produce some very lively interaction between texts and dimensions, but James does more than simply layer them. In addition to aligning the prefaces and fictions as narratives, he develops metaphors in the prefaces that, by virtue of their own homological relations with other metaphors in the prefaces and in the fictions, enable the active management of relations between and within texts. By first structurally aligning a preface with a novel, and then designing an active connection through interrelated metaphors, the prefacer can "remount the stream of composition," and again become an active agent within the fiction (2:xii; *AN* 27). James most effectively employs this technique in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. In that preface, he generates an opposed duo of metaphors that embody the central conflict, between vision and structure, in the compositional process. That metaphor set is homologically aligned with the approaches to living embodied by the opposed characters in the novel. The prefacer then generates an enveloping metaphor that "reveals" the oppositions as dialectical, opening them up to intertextual resolutions and setting them on a historical path that curves through both fictional and real historical dimensions. Not only is the intradiegetic action of *The Portrait of a Lady* thus placed in a developmental continuum that runs from the author's pre-authorial past, through compositional processes and the action within other texts, and out into the reflective experience of the prefacer, it is also placed in a perpendicularly-aligned continuum that runs from the fictional action, through the narrator's level, and out into the reader's experience.

This representational dynamic is very interesting in itself, and an understanding of it produces some interesting results, such as the aforementioned

realignment of meaning and outcome in *The Portrait of a Lady*, which I will detail in the following chapter. What is perhaps more interesting is the development of James's ability to use metaphor, a fundamental representational technique to manage a wide variety of relations both fictional and real – and thus to extend a particular kind of agency to everyone involved, characters and readers included. When the prefacer creates and deploys a set of metaphors to allow him reentry into the narrative stream of *The Portrait of a Lady*, he demonstrates his technique and makes it available to his reader. This technique – which employs a kind of structural grammar – can be used, by anyone engaged in a relation, to produce agency through dialogue with another. James's mechanism by which one can achieve agency within, and with respect to, relation is simple. Agency results from figuring a relation with another in a manner that takes into account the imagination and desires of the other; one then deploys a representation of oneself within the same figure.² The figural agent, to an extent autonomous, creates effects that are for various reasons not possible in the real world. The possibilities created in the figured relation are applicable to the real relation, not only in the manner that a model illustrates and enables real-world possibilities, but also in a more direct way.

Ultimately, for James, the figural representation of a relation is as real as the relation itself. Because a relation is not a thing, but rather the ever-changing shape of the multi-dimensional space between things, and because human relations are not subject to consensus-based objectivity, but are dependent to a unique degree on the imaginations of those participating in them, they can best be imagined and represented by using figural representation. Human relations are often too complex and occur

² Throughout this study I use the terms “figure” and “metaphor” interchangeably. In many cases, I choose the term “figure” because it converts to a verb more readily than does the term “metaphor.” As such, it can more accurately convey the active function of metaphor in James's novels and prefaces. I also use the more general term “figure” to reflect the more central and expanded function of metaphor in James's later work.

over too much time to be described through means that would work for something more static, such as a house, or even a city. This is the reason that, over the course of the nineteenth-century the novel, the long literary form, became the prime genre for describing types and positing possibilities of relation – between individuals and between individuals and groups.

One of the primary functions of the New York Edition prefaces is to show how James learns to create narratives that reveal how metaphors can enable agency to emerge in human relations. The prefacer, unifying means and end, uses metaphors to re-imagine and thus to change the relations between his younger selves and the fictions they authored. Those relations are refigured so that they align homologically with intradiegetic action and figuration. The information and conditions produced in the newly-figured relations between a young James and his fiction can be transferred by an alert reader to the intradiegetic relational dynamics. When the prefacer figures the young author of *The Portrait of a Lady* as a kind of quixotic knight defending the virginal character from an advancing host of plotting devices, he can transfer the information contained in this metaphor to the situation in which Isabel Archer (figured as an ever-expanding circle) is beset by the plotting Gilbert Osmond (metonymically figured as an antique coin) and Madame Merle. This move is metaleptic in the classical sense – the terms of one metaphor are applied to another – and it is also related to Gerard Genette's idea of "narrative metalepsis," in which knowledge is transferred from one level of narration to another by a non-discursive means (Genette 235). Such a transferral is, for Genette, "always transgressive," presumably because it violates the integrity of the narrative (Genette 234). For James, agency is always going to be to a certain extent transgressive, because in order to move, to make things happen, one must transcend the strictures of whatever forms are in force at the time. In this case, as in so many others, transgression leads to more transgression. If the

preface's relation applies to the novel's relations, then the context of the preface's relation can apply to the context of the novel's relations – for as James famously put it in the preface to *Roderick Hudson*, “relations stop nowhere” (1:3; AN 5). Because the preface's figured relation is enveloped in the story of authorial development, a development figured as an organic growth, the conflict between character and plot can be understood as a dialectical stage in a process that leads to the completion of an interesting novel. Applying these enveloping conditions to the unresolved conflict inside *The Portrait of a Lady* allows one to understand it as part of a developmental process that exceeds the scope of the novel. Such an understanding is further enabled by the homological relations between the fictions and by strategic revisions of the novel itself. It also makes clear a central characteristic thread of that development.

What the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* clarifies on the intradiegetic level is that, before she can alter her situation, Isabel must learn to imagine herself in the minds of others as part of imagining and then creating viable working relations with them. The prefacer also clarifies that for the narrator, the problem is an initial inability to effectively narrate a character looking at herself through other eyes. The narrator of the novel can narrate Isabel Archer's ideas about herself and her relations with things in general, but only toward the end of the novel, with some help from the reviser, is that ability effectively applied to alter specific features of her relations with others. The preface unites means and end by using a metaphor to alter relations between prefacer, young author and text to show that over the course of his career he learned to use metaphors to access and alter relations throughout the entire representational dynamic – between author, prefacer, younger authors, texts, characters, narrative dimensions and readers.

Casting forward and back through the prefaces and the oeuvre for clear signs of this development, one finds two novels marked by their structural and thematic

relations to *The Portrait of a Lady* as prime sites for analysis. *The American* and *The Golden Bowl* share with *The Portrait of a Lady* a set of structural and thematic characteristics that mark them as usefully homologous. Even without the aid of the prefacer, one might easily recognize these three novels as parts of a developing progression. All three are marriage plots, with the plot in each subsequent novel extending further through a crisis. In *The American*, the marriage plan is foiled before the marriage itself. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, the marriage is enacted and then passes into a crisis which is not resolved by the end of the novel. In *The Golden Bowl*, the marriage happens at the beginning of the novel and the crisis is by the end successfully managed. They all involve a conflict between American and European values, embodied in the opposed characters. Newman, as the novel's title suggests, is an archetypically American character in opposition to the ultra-French Bellegarde family. Isabel Archer, in *The Portrait of a Lady*, comes over the water from upstate New York, and finds herself involved with the expatriate, Europeanized Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle. The American Maggie, in *The Golden Bowl*, matches wits with her Italian husband, Amerigo, and the also Europeanized Charlotte. In each successive novel the cultural distance between the American and the more European characters is diminished. Newman is the least and Maggie the most cosmopolitan of the protagonists. The heroes of all three novels share a set of assets and face similar challenges. Each protagonist is rich – money is a key ingredient in James's formula for success. It could be said that all of them are, in one way or another, attempting to transform money into love. They are all of good character. This quality brings to each of them very faithful friends who serve as allies in the crisis. Newman has his expatriate friends Mr. and Mrs. Tristram, the Bellegarde's old maid Mrs. Bread, and Claire's younger brother Valentin. Isabel has her uncle Mr. Touchett, her cousin Ralph, her stepdaughter Pansy, and Osmond's sister the Countess Gemini. Maggie

has the Assinghams, the shopkeeper, and ultimately her husband Amerigo. All three novels are constructed on a simple sensationalist plot frame. Each protagonist faces plotting and trickery, and each is given knowledge of a secret that could help them to gain the upper hand. Newman learns from Mrs. Bread that the Bellegardes had effectively murdered Claire's father, the old Marquis. He finds that he cannot use this secret to force the Bellegardes to allow the marriage. Isabel Archer learns from the Countess Gemini that Madame Merle and Osmond had previously been lovers, and that Merle is the mother of Osmond's daughter Pansy. She is able to use this knowledge to loosen Osmond's hold on her enough that she can banish Merle to America and travel to her cousin's deathbed in England. The novel ends before it can tell whether she applies this knowledge to further modify her relations with her husband. Maggie Verver learns from the antiquities dealer that Amerigo and Charlotte had been to the antiquities shop together before Maggie's marriage – and from this knowledge deduces that they had previously, and were presently, lovers. She is able to successfully manage her knowledge of this secret – winning back Amerigo's loyalty and maneuvering Charlotte away from him and out of the country. In a body of fictions known for intertextual connections, these three novels are unique in the degree to which they are homologically related.

The preface to *The American* works to highlight these relations and to establish the novel as a starting point, a zero point, for a development, on several levels, that culminates in the "manner" of *The Golden Bowl* and the prefaces themselves – a manner which allows both narrator and character to conceptualize, represent, and modify relations with allies and enemies so as to achieve the desired effect. The prefacer, coyly, and rather oddly, refuses to say whether he actually finished *The American* in Paris – refuses to even try to remember. He writes, "I shall not tell whether I did there bring my book to a close – and indeed I shrink from putting the

question to the test of memory” (2 xiii; AN 28). He suggests that he may have extended “over the channel a lengthening chain” (2 xiii; AN 28). He wants here to “reduce to the absurd...any undue measure of the interest of this insistent recovery of what I have called attendant facts” – and thus to open the composition process up to the present (2 xiii; AN 28). This move allows the novel to be brought into an immediate, transformative engagement with the prefaces and with the other works in the New York Edition. The prefacer’s creative memory of his compositional struggles, “bathes [his] course in a golden glow by which the very objects along the road are transfigured and glorified” (2 xiv; AN 30).

In the preface to *The American* the prefacer quickly establishes the same triadic relation between himself, a younger self, and the original novel that he uses in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. As in that later preface, he fondly highlights the naiveté of his younger self as that self bravely struggles with the difficulties of composition. The prefacer concludes that his younger self failed to produce a sufficiently realistic account of the interactions between his protagonist and those who oppose the enactment of his desires. In the novel, the Bellegardes – the relatively impoverished noble family of Claire de Cintré, the woman Newman wishes to marry – object to Newman’s commercial vulgarity, and ultimately refuse to allow the marriage. The prefacer writes that, in reality, the Bellegardes “would positively have jumped...at my rich and easy American, and not have ‘minded’ in the least any drawback” (2 xix; AN 35). He claims that he doesn’t value realism over romance – he writes that he finds it most interesting when the novelist “commits himself in both directions...by some need of performing his whole possible revolution” – but he betrays his bias toward realism by figuring romantic approaches as “hocus-pocus” (2 xv; AN 31, xiii; 34). The audience, in order to accept deviations from the realistic, must be “skillfully and successfully drugged,” so that “the way things don’t happen

may be artfully made to pass for the way things do” (2 xviii; *AN* 34). He writes that if he had “patched it up to a greater apparent soundness” his “trick...would have been played” (2 xix; *AN* 35). He suggests that the root of his realism problem was his insistence on creating a consistent protagonist:

My concern, as I saw it, was to make and to keep Newman consistent; the picture of his consistency was all my undertaking, and the memory of *that* infatuation perfectly abides with me. He was to be the lighted figure, the others – even doubtless to an excessive degree the woman who is made the agent of his discomfiture – were to be the obscured; by which I should largely get the very effect most to be invoked, that of a generous nature engaged with forces, with difficulties and dangers, that it but half understands. (2 xxi; *AN* 37)³

The attempt to write a character as consistently good, and the attendant technique of lighting him while obscuring the other characters, in themselves create the unrealistic turn in the plot. James confesses that, in spite of his declared “serenity” with respect to the project, he suspects that he had “all the while an uneasy suspicion” about his need for the good Newman to “be ill-used” (2 xix; *AN* 35). He is working on two technical levels here, claiming that creating a consistent character will produce unrealistic effects in the plot, and at the same time claiming that the technique of highlighting such a character and obscuring others also participates in producing those effects. On yet another level, the autobiographical, it is the “infatuation” with creating a consistent character, and the fact that he is “possessed of [his] idea that Newman should be ill-used,” that blinds the young author to “the hole into which [he] was destined to fall” (2 xix; *AN* 35). The relationship that the prefacer establishes between the young author and his original text – in which the young author requires his

³ The italics are James’s

protagonist to be consistently admirable, and by so doing produces undesirable effects – highlights a homologically related dynamic inside the story.

Because he is who he is, Newman is in the end unable to convince the Bellegardes to sanction the marriage. He can't get them to change their perceived relation to him because he can't imagine the relation in their minds. In order for him to shift the relation he would have to effectively imagine the terms of the relation – their terms as well as his terms. Newman's consistency forecloses on the possibility for him to change his relations with the Bellegardes. In order for him to be consistent he can't allow his understanding of his own character to be contingent on others' understanding of it. This self-sufficiency is often understood by other characters as a positive quality. When Newman offers the possibility of a job as an investor in America to Claire's hapless brother Valentin, the younger man wonders if he, too, could become "a man who dominated circumstances," rather than one who is subject to the conditions of his birth, to his relations with family and history (*Am* 345). The problem is not precisely that Newman's money comes from manufacturing, though the commercial ideology and system in which he earned it have produced Newman's ideas about who he is, or more accurately, who he is not, in relation to others. The problem is that this set of ideas about himself prevents him from understanding and appreciating the Bellegardes' ideas about themselves.

The Bellegardes are old French nobility. Their politics are so conservative that they refuse to attend the court of Napoleon III, and even refuse to socialize with Orléanist royalists. The Marquis, Claire's older brother and the male head of the family, "entertained but a single political conviction – dearer to him, however, than all the others, put together, that other people might entertain: he believed, namely, in the divine right of Henry of Bourbon, Fifth of his name, to the throne of France" (*Am* 250). Newman measures others' beliefs and behaviors against his own thoughtlessly

acquired, unexamined beliefs. He has acquired his perspective in the struggle to become rich, and his beliefs about how one relates to others are grounded in economic relations. In such relations it really doesn't matter what someone else thinks of one. What matters is that all adhere to the guidelines governing transactions. When one owns something it doesn't matter much who the previous owner was. Newman has no interest in the fact that Claire was married before, and he is not interested in the implications of her Bellegarde pedigree. Newman wonders if she is "subject to that application of the idea of 'rank' which made her a kind of historical formation" (*Am* 122). He concludes that this kind of rank – like official status in the civil war, where he had risen to the rank of brigadier general – doesn't matter very much. He discards the feature of rank that connects the individual with others and concludes that Claire's rank matters in that it is "pretty and becoming, with a property in the bearer" (*Am* 122). Newman can only understand her social position as imparting value to the individual – a value detachable from its context. He doesn't understand her obligation to her family where the marriage is concerned. In a commercial situation, when property is traded between two parties, it does not matter who owned the property in the past. However, in situations concerned with inheritance, succession, and feudally-derived relations, all historical connections matter greatly. In the mind of a traditional nobility, even property and marriage fall under the jurisdiction of a hierarchical structure of relations with the king at the apex.

It is, ironically, Newman's economically-derived ideas that enable him to declare that his commercial past shouldn't matter. Newman simultaneously complains of "being turned off because one was a commercial person," and betrays his understanding as commercial (*Am* 421). He claims that he has not "talked or dreamt of the commercial since his connection with the Bellegardes began," and then describes his situation as being "cleverly 'sold'" (*Am* 421). He "felt himself as

swindled” (*Am* 422). The Bellegardes don’t articulate such an understanding of how Newman’s commercial past bears on his suitability as a relation, but they are certain in their belief that it does, and they know that it bears on his incapacity to understand them. When Newman first meets Claire’s mother, the Marquise, she asks him in detail about this family and his business. When he then announces to her his intention to court her daughter, and asks for leave to do so, she tells him, “You don’t know what you ask” (*Am* 197). Even after all the interactions, when the affair is nearly concluded, she tells him, “Think of us as you like – you don’t really know us” (*Am* 368). Newman not only can’t understand the Bellegardes, can’t see relations from their perspective, he has trouble even recognizing them as human. Invited to the Bellegardes for supper, he expends “a good deal of unsuspected imaginative effort...to assume them to be of a human substance...not alien to his own” (*Am* 247). At a party the Bellegardes give to announce the engagement of Newman and Claire (an engagement they intend to break), Newman momentarily attempts to see himself through the eyes of the Bellegardes’ friends. He projects his own bigotry and wonders, “for a single instant,” if the Marquis sees him as “stepping about like a terrier on his hind legs” (*Am* 323). He quickly abandons his uncharacteristically introspective idea – his “momentary consciousness of perhaps too broad a grin” – and loses himself in “the sense of what he had ‘made’”, considering his achievement to be akin to one of his “prodigies of gain” (*Am* 324). Note that the possibility of representing the perspective of another, of moving toward understanding the relation as dialogic, is shouldered out by the economic representations.

Newman’s inability to understand himself in others’ terms is not limited to his relations with the French. Before he meets Claire de Cintré, Newman takes a tour of Europe intended to further his cultural education. In Holland he meets “Babcock...a young Unitarian minister; a small, spare, neatly-attired man, with a strikingly candid

countenance” (*Am* 90). Babcock is from Dorchester, Massachusetts. His congregation has financed his trip to the continent in order that he might enrich his mind, and he feels an obligation to take the culture in a manner that will bear some fruit in his pastoral relation to his charges. He admires Newman, considers him to be “one of nature’s noblemen,” and is “strongly drawn to him” (*Am* 91). Though they are both Americans, they have “by habit and form as little in common as possible” (*Am* 91). Babcock takes things seriously – to be more precise, he takes his relation to things seriously, and he is bothered that Newman does not. The latter, “who never reflected on such matters, accepted the situation with great equanimity, but Babcock used to meditate over it privately; used often indeed to retire to his room early in the evening for the express purpose of considering it conscientiously” (*Am* 91). Babcock ultimately has to take his leave of Newman, but not because of his friend’s inability and apparent unwillingness to understand his relation to the culture they encounter. The young minister’s real problem is that Newman is unable or unwilling to understand his concerns about their relation to culture and about the relation between the two of them. He tries “to explain what he meant by some of his principal doubts,” but Newman, while congenial, doesn’t understand them as useful or relevant to himself:

Newman could entertain a respect for any man’s subject and thought his friend fortunate to have so special a one. He accepted all the proofs of its importance that were thus anxiously offered him, and put them away in what he supposed a very safe place; but poor Babcock never afterwards recognised his gifts among the articles that Newman had in daily use. (*Am* 94)

When Babcock finally has had enough and must take his leave of Newman, the older man is somewhat confounded by the younger’s problem. Babcock tells him, “We

don't understand each other" – to which Newman replies, "Why I hoped I did. But what if I don't; where's the harm?" (*Am* 95). In the end, the distraught young man is unable to explain himself and can only say how the lack of mutual understanding affects him, rendering their relation impossible. Newman is, even as they part, not particularly bothered by the break in the friendship. It is as if he feels himself above the vicissitudes that are for others inherent in human relations. He tells Babcock, with a laugh, "Go your way, by all means. I shall miss you; but you've seen I make friends very easily. You'll be lonely yourself; but drop me a line when you feel like it, and I'll wait for you anywhere" (*Am* 96). He displays this same easygoing generosity to the Bellegardes as long as they don't interfere with his plan to acquire Claire as a wife.

The difference, between Newman's attitude toward the loss of Babcock's friendship and his attitude toward the loss of his fiancée, is not due only to the difference in the degree to which one is attached to a travelling companion as opposed to a fiancée. When Newman loses Claire he reacts, to a certain extent, as a lover might whose love affair has been thwarted by the lover's family, and whose love has been irreversibly entombed in a convent. He moons about and stands disconsolately outside the convent walls. His grief, however, is dwarfed by his outrage at the Bellegardes who have cheated him out of what was, by verbal contract, his. The Bellegardes' ideas about propriety in relation are amusing to Newman until they impinge on his ability to acquire what he very much wants. His outrage is not enough to make him stoop to using the dark secret to take the Bellegardes down a few social notches. Not only are they willing to weather any troubles that a revelation of their secret would bring, but such a revelation would not release Claire from the convent. If Newman were to reveal the secret, it would be purely for revenge. Here it is his consistency, his integrity, the same quality that has incapacitated him in his dealings with the Bellegardes, that prevents him from dealing the dirty blow. Though he can

still blame the Bellegardes, and can turn his back on France forever, he still must understand the whole affair as a failure.

Though the prefacer doesn't, of course, regard *The American* as a failure in the sense that Newman's enterprise is one, his primary critical comment concerns the novel's failure as realism. He opposes consistency to realism and in addition works to define the difference between realism and romance as one in which the real involves uncertainty, contingency and risk, while the romantic seeks certainty, integrity, and safety. This is, of course, not the usual perspective on the difference. The prefacer synthesizes some common ideas about the romantic:

There have been, I gather, many definitions of romance, as a matter indispensably of boats, or of caravans, or of tigers, or of "historical characters," or of ghosts, or of forgers, or of detectives, or of beautiful wicked women, or of pistols and knives, but they appear for the most part reducible to the idea of the facing of danger, the acceptance of great risks for the fascination, the very love, of their uncertainty, the joy of success if possible and of battle in any case. This would be a fine formula if it bore examination; but it strikes me as weak and inadequate, as by no means covering the true ground as yet as landing us in strange confusions. (2 xvi; AN 32)

He argues that the "panting pursuit of danger is the pursuit of life itself, in which danger awaits us possibly at every step and faces us at every turn" (2 xvi; AN 32). Romance, in contrast, as "the dream of some intenser experience easily becomes rather some vision of a sublime security like that enjoyed on the flowery plains of heaven, where we may conceive ourselves proceeding in ecstasy from one prodigious phase and form of it to another" (2 xvi; AN 32). He ultimately defines romance as a rejection of relation:

The only *general* attribute of projected romance that I can see, the only one that fits all its cases, is the fact of the kind of experience with which it deals – experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt from the conditions that we usually know to attach to it and, if we wish so to put the matter, drag upon it, and operating in a medium which relieves it, on a particular interest, of the inconvenience of a *related*, a measurable state, a state subject to all our vulgar communities. (2 xvii; AN 33)⁴

Through an inversion of this definition, one can understand that for the prefacer relation itself becomes the prime subject of realist fiction. As he seeks to bring the various works of the oeuvre into meaningful relations with one another, he also declares that one of those relations is their involvement in a progressive understanding of how to represent relation. In the preface to *The American* and in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, he works to engender a perspective that pushes back against the perspective most available in those novels. By figuring his younger selves as involved in somewhat misguided projects to protect the integrity of their protagonists, of their initial visions, against the limiting structures of representation itself, he shows the homologically-related protagonists to be equally misguided in their wish to remain independent, to be free of societal, relational strictures. This works against the novels' glorification of those protagonists and vilification of their adversaries. It engenders an understanding of these earlier characters as shadowy types, working toward a fuller capacity to engage, represent, and affect relation. Moving outward, or perhaps upward, through the homologically-aligned layers, one finds the prefacer suggesting at the same time that he would like his reader to understand Henry James's career as one in which he progressed in an intelligible way from an unskilled realist to a master of

⁴ The italics are James's.

the form. Thinking about the authorial story in this way allows one to understand why James returned to the simple sensationalist form at the end of his career. Leo Bersani argues that the plots of *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl*, which “are simply inferior, corny plots compared with other realistic novelists intent, unlike James, on imposing plots as definitive versions of reality,” allow James to use the novel form to resist and contain “the theoretically limitless capacity of the imagination to expand” (Bersani 142). For Bersani, it is “frivolous to see in James only a limitless faith in the civilizing powers of intelligence” (Bersani 141). Rather, “[s]ociety and personality are more likely to be *victimized* by the autonomy of an intelligence responsive only to its own discriminatory logic” (Bersani 142).⁵ Bringing not only his ambitious characters, but also his ambitious narrator, into a dialogic relation with these simple plot forms requires James to apply his highest art to carry out those ambitions. In order to represent the possible relations as richly and as extensively as the form will allow, James more and more uses, and ultimately extends to his characters, the tool of metaphor to figure them.

In the preface to *The American*, the prefacer doesn’t dramatize the history of the novel’s composition with a set of metaphors as he does in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. The homology, between the story of the young author and the story of the rich American in Paris, is set up without the bridging metaphors used in the later preface. The homology still works to highlight features, as well as to suggest interpretive threads and to orient the novel with the rest of the fictions, but it can’t do the more specific and powerful work that the metaphors in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* do with the corresponding metaphors in the novel. The reason that it can’t do this kind of work is precisely because there are no figures in *The American* for figures in a preface to work with. Although Isabel Archer is no Maggie Verver, whose

⁵ The italics are Bersani’s.

skill in the uses of figuration rivals the prefacer's, her narrator uses metaphor quite extensively in describing her relation to herself and to the other characters. These metaphors are often played out in free indirect discourse, and are thus to some extent applicable to both the extra- and intradiegetic dimensions. The homologically-aligned metaphors in the preface can then very actively affect meaning in the novel as well as the meaning of the novel's relation to other works. The lack of metaphoric interaction between *The American* and its preface does, however, serve admirably to place it at the zero point in a progression that culminates in the abilities active in *The Golden Bowl* and in the prefaces.

In the following chapter I detail the interactions between *The Portrait of a Lady* and its preface, and describe some of the effects this interaction can have on readings of the novel. Through what is perhaps the most actively transformative relations between fiction and preface, *The Portrait of a Lady* becomes a liminal, rather than a problem, novel. The oppositions in the story are opened up to experimentation and resolution in other texts. Isabel Archer's development is aligned within a larger developmental process. Her disillusionment enables the acquisition of skills the nature of which the prefacer makes clearer. She can, more and more, as her Emersonian belief in her own integrity diminishes, see clearly the shape of her relations with the other characters. She senses the truth of the relation between Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle. She is able to question intelligently the relations between herself and Merle, Ralph Touchett, and Osmond. These skills, ultimately, place her in a very powerful position – she is, by the end of the novel, the first in a line of super-conscious Jamesian characters, engaging and besting Serena Merle in a nearly telepathic “high fight” that presages the dramatic occult encounters between Maggie and Charlotte in *The Golden Bowl*. With this kind of perspective on Isabel's prospects, one can pass beyond the fruitless dilemma that the ending of the novel has

for so many readers always posed. The process by which the preface does this work is the process it wishes to draw attention to in the texts.

This developmental thread doesn't disappear in the period between *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl*. James's ability to generate agency with metaphors, and to transfer agency intertextually and interdimensionally, requires a specific narrative skill set and works within a specialized kind of narrative structure. Many of these skills – such as the ability to launch a focalizing consciousness within the fiction, to extend and at the same time risk authorial control by deploying an agent who has her own creative agenda, and the ability to artfully manage at any narrative moment the balance of what can be known and what cannot – are worked out in shorter fictions such as “In the Cage,” and of course, *The Turn of the Screw*. The extension of what James calls a “reflector,” as I will detail in my reading of *The Golden Bowl*, enables homological relations between character, narrator and reader, and is thus essential to the transportation of information and agency across narrative boundaries. In the short story “In the Cage,” James experiments with the limits and reach of such a narrative agent by placing her inside her telegraphist's cage, by fixing her focalizing point in space while the action, which is also limited by her function, passes in front of her. Under these constraints, simplified analogues of plot and character limitations in the novels, the narrative agent demonstrates her ability to, as S. Selina Jamil puts it, “make narrative connections among the bits and pieces of information about upper class life that she receives by way of the telegrams that pass through her hands,” with which she “creates romantic narratives about the Captain's intimate relationship with Lady Bradeen and about her own imaginary relationship with him” (Jamil 15). The efforts of this character to somehow modify her position through her readings of the texts available to her, to effect an exit from her cage, fail because her access to information is limited not only by her position, but also by her

romantic approach to reading and writing. Her ultimate failure to improve her situation begins with a failure to accept a more realistic view of her relations with those who make use of her services, and is sealed by her related failure to imagine futures that are neither sublime nor ghastly, but that are instead negotiated, worked out in a dialogue with other characters and with the factors that constrain her freedom. Just as Christopher Newman's consistent goodness draws in, even creates, the social barriers to the fulfillment of his desire, and just as Isabel Archer's need to be very good and fully free attracts Osmond and Merle, and helps construct her moral prison, so the little telegraphist's rejection of her cage in favor of a romantic fantasy ultimately relegates her to a much more restrictive situation than she might have otherwise negotiated. At the end of the story, as she leans over the canal in the fog, unbeknownst to her, she is under the watchful eye of a policeman, the point man for the forces of social restriction.

In *The Turn of the Screw*, written at about the same time, James gives nearly full narrative control to his protagonist. The governess is less confined spatially and socially than the telegraphist, but rather than expressing her desires in outright romantic fantasies about the Master, she produces a full-on ghost story. What James is experimenting with here is a limitation and isolation of the narrative focus in conjunction with a maximization of the imaginative scope produced by the focalizer. The ghost story is not confirmable either intra- or extradiegetically because it is produced by the governess in isolation. It is, as the prefacer puts it, "a perfect example of an exercise of the imagination unassisted, unassociated – playing the game, making the score, in the phrase of our sporting day, off its own bat" (12:xvi; AN 171). The prefacer is as usual referring to the process of composition, to the younger author's freedom to work with a story that is removed from the constraints of "the usual or the true, or the terrible 'pleasant,'" but in accordance with the homologic of these

prefaces' relation to their fictions, the description of the extradiegetic conditions applies as well to the intradiegetic (12:xvi; AN 170). The isolation of the governess from other characters, and from a narrator, who could confirm her reality, coupled with the reach of her imagination produce not only a fictional situation that will not submit to stable interpretation, but also a fictional situation that is interminably available to interpretation.

Interestingly, the too-specific attribution of the spectral scenes in *The Turn of the Screw* has the same effect as the ambiguous attribution of Maggie's imagined scenes in *The Golden Bowl*. In both cases the facts about the scenes in question are available at every narrative level. In the ghost story, the governess, Douglass the intradiegetic reader of her story, the unnamed narrator, and the extradiegetic reader are all equally confounded by the epistemological dilemma – all are equally, so to speak, enchanted and disempowered. Maggie's fantasies in *The Golden Bowl* are equally available for interpretation at several narrative levels, but this availability is due to the ambiguity, as opposed to the specificity, of their attribution. Many of Maggie's metaphorical fantasies are rendered such that it is impossible to determine to what degree they are created by the character as opposed to the narrator. It is also often impossible to temporally locate the fantasies with respect to the action, or to determine to what extent other characters are aware of the fantasies, and to what extent they are directly responding to them. However, in *The Golden Bowl*, these fantasies are clearly marked as metaphorical, and though the relations between the metaphorical and the real become tighter and tighter as the action progresses, one can always know that one is present at a dialogue between the represented and the real, rather than at an irresolvable dispute over what is real. These ambiguities open the text up to a reader. They allow a reader to decide for herself the extent to which the fantasies belong to the character, to what extent they are shared by other characters, and where they are

located in the action. These decisions allow for more decisions. Because Maggie is using metaphors as a tool to model, predict, and affect relations, decisions concerning the attribution, temporal location, and intradiegetic availability of the metaphors enable and directly affect decisions about how successful she is in her endeavors. In the second volume of *The Golden Bowl*, a reader has the option of being directly involved, with the narrator and Maggie herself, in determining the aptness and useful extension of the metaphors that she employs. This reader, then, is given a working stake in the realist project. A reader of *The Golden Bowl* can, through a complex dynamic of aesthetic and logical determinations, at the same time evaluate and create relations between cause and effect so as to ultimately determine whether Maggie and the narrator are successful in their respective endeavors.

In what is for a Jamesian character a very bold move, Maggie declares at the end of the novel that she has achieved success. The prefacer is equally satisfied with his authorial performance, though he remarks that he perhaps did a better job with *The Ambassadors*. At the end of that novel Lambert Strether, perhaps the most James-like protagonist of them all, is not sure at all about his success – and well he might wonder. By the end he has failed in his initial purpose, and then, once he reversed his purpose, failed in that too. He has ruined his engagement with his fiancée. Because he is poor and his fiancée rich, he has also lost his chance at a fortune. He finds himself unable to accept the love of Maria Gostrey, the anglicized American woman who understands him and would take him into her comfortable life, and he is unsure of what he is to do next. To be fair, James does not give Strether the advantages enjoyed by Christopher Newman, Isabel Archer and Maggie Verver. He is not rich. Though he is of good character, he is not charismatic to the degree that the other three are, and so while other characters in the novel are trusting and well-disposed to him, he doesn't inspire the same degree of attraction and loyalty. He does come into possession of a sort of

secret – the fact that Chad Newsome’s relations with Madame de Vionnet are more than platonic – but it is really an open secret to those less naïve than himself, and is of no use in his endeavors.

Strether is also missing something indispensable to the success of the others, and that is his own story in which to be successful. Millicent Bell has argued, that “[u]nlike Isabel Archer, Lambert Strether thinks it too late to find an adequate plot for himself, but engages himself in the effort to discover – and even to rewrite – the story of another man” (Bell 514). Because Strether is unable to act on his own behalf, and is also unable to commit himself to the service of Mrs. Newsome, he finds himself with nothing at the end of the novel except for what Maria Gostrey refers to as his “wonderful impressions” (*Amb* 2:326). Sallie Sears has argued that *The American* and *The Ambassadors* are prime examples of the recurring failure of James’s “great dream” which consists of “a reconciliation or dialectical transcendence” (Sears 6). She notes that Strether, once he is in Europe, begins to compose his experience in much the same homological manner as does the prefacer – a manner that involves “the yoking together of heterogeneous associations and areas of experience” (Sears 103). For Sears, Strether’s failure to make something out of his impressions is due to the “paradox of his character,” the fact that he is “a man of imagination who is at the same time a New England puritan (Sears 105). This is a very reasonable reading of Strether’s dilemma, but one which leads to the frustrating conclusion that James’s late fiction is worthless as realism, that it is, at the end of the day, concerned only with producing sterile aesthetic effects interesting only to those who are willing to spend a great deal of time and energy to experience them. The prefaces tell us, however, directly and by example through their method, that the kind of realism James was developing can be a uniquely powerful tool for the transformation of reality.

Strether's failure, apparent when one compares his imaginative behavior to the prefacer's, to Isabel's at the end of *The Portrait of a Lady*, and to Maggie's in the second half of *The Golden Bowl*, is not the result of his impossibly paradoxical character; it is simply that he has no functional personal agenda. In these fictions and metafiction, intention is indispensable in making the dialogic cycle turn. Strether's failure is born in the very heart of his method, and he reveals it to Maria Gostrey at the end of the novel when he tells her, "That, you see, is my only logic. Not, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself" (*Amb* 2:326). Throughout James's work, a functional relation involves a dialogue between self and other whose subject is the differences and samenesses in the desires and intentions of the two parties. Each negotiation between these intentions ideally produces another stage in the growth of the relation. Because Strether has nothing to say for himself, he is of no use to anyone. When Strether insists that he must leave Maria, as he says "[t]o be right," he is avoiding the risk of being to some extent wrong (*Amb* 2:326). Every other character in the novel at some point picks up the thread of his or her self interest and moves along in some negotiated relation to the others. Even the often ridiculously unconscious Waymarsh and Mrs. Pocock, and the prodigal Chad Newsome ultimately know what they are about, and thereby advance their own and others' causes. It is through denying his own interested part in the dialogic process that Strether ends up with nothing. His stance is like Isabel Archer's in her approach to Gilbert Osmond – in denying that she has any interest in who he is, that she has nothing to gain from the relation, she creates what James refers to as a false position, and ends up in an emotional wasteland. To use Bersani's terms, Archer and Strether have victimized themselves through insisting on a kind of conscious autonomy – a disengagement from the general economy of desire and intention.

Kate Croy's approach, in *The Wings of the Dove*, is the complement to Strether's. Croy's method, which employs deception to usurp the desires and intentions of another, leaves her equally empty-handed. In a stark contrast to Strether, her desires and her intentions are clear and sharp – she knows who and what she wants, and she has a plan to get them. Her method, which involves deception, is intimately related to the methods of Serena Merle and Charlotte Verver. In each case, information must be withheld from a good friend, so that the desires and intentions of the friend can be bent to serve one's own desires and intentions. Also, in each case, the male collaborator/lover must be, to some extent, shared with the friend who is being deceived. Finally, there must be some justification in which the best interests of the victim are, without her consent, served. What happens in each case is that the friend and victim becomes aware of the excess of relation, of the fact that there is another, a disguised, source of intention and desire pulling on the relation, which awareness leads to a discovery of the secret and the foiling of the plot. One might be able to think of Isabel Archer's and Lambert Strether's methodology as philosophical, and its counterpart as political and judicial. The first refuses to fully engage and the second over-engages – in the first method one's desires and intentions are withheld from the other and in the second they are imposed on the other. In the Jamesian world neither method is productive.

In each case, the character is attempting to avoid the risks inherent in dialogic relation. For the prefacer, and for the author of the late novels, the basic dynamic operating in a real dialogic relation is the same as the dynamic operating at the heart of and throughout artistic representation. The very act of conceiving oneself in relation with an external other is identical, for James, to the act of conceiving reality in relation to a representation of it, and since even real human relations are made of mutually interactive ideas of self, other and the relations themselves, there is no wall between

fictional representations of relation and real ones. Driven by the overt intentionality of the prefacer, the prefaces reveal an open-ended, radically unpredictable, dynamic system in which chains, loops, circles and whorls of relations alternately bind and free intentional agents as they move through time. Because the essential dynamics of relation are the same in the fictional and real worlds, methods perfected and lessons learned within a fictional world created by a fictional character can be applied in the world of the character, narrator, prefacer and reader. John Carlos Rowe has argued that James's late style is "a retreat from life into the palace of art," but I would argue that a primary goal of the New York Edition is to demonstrate that life and art are, in a profound sense, the same (Rowe 28).

A Return to the Garden: Metaphor at Work on *The Portrait of a Lady*

The New York Edition preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, perhaps the most well-known of the prefaces, begins to work with the novel in much the same way that the preface to *The American* does. In this preface, however, the prefacer is able to more fully gain purchase on the interior workings of the novel. With this purchase he can pull himself into the representational dynamic, reach in to modify relations, shift emphases, rebalance oppositions, and ultimately reorient the novel to the other texts in the New York Edition. As the prefacer moves between the autobiographical, real dimension and the interior, fictional dimension, he models a movement that a reader can use to access and modify meaning in the novel for herself. This movement, initiated and enacted in the account the prefacer gives of the conception and creation of the novel, is the same as the movement that the novel's protagonist eventually learns, and which allows her to move through barriers previously impassable. The relation between the preface and the novel works to underwrite and emphasize the idea that, by the end of the novel, Isabel Archer has maneuvered herself into a position of power. Her possibilities can therefore be best understood by looking forward to later novels – specifically to *The Golden Bowl*, in which Maggie successfully develops, and applies to a similar problem, the kind of skills that Isabel is discovering at the end of this novel.

James's radical interventions – in this and other prefaces – could easily be construed as a suggestion that his younger selves are already and knowingly engaged in the same projects as is the old master. One might easily critique these interventions as an attempt to retrospectively impose teleology on, to extend his authority over, unacceptably unruly early works – as anxiously imposing coherence on what is often not coherent, imposing unity on what is various, and imposing a clear narrative of

development on what is in reality a non-linear career – all the while naturalizing these commentaries and revisions as disinterested memoir and clarification. Based on such suppositions, it is rather easy to show how the attempt backfires; how James's efforts to suture and paste together a fragmented oeuvre only work to highlight differences and multiplicities; how an attempt to incorporate a past authorial self only reiterates it as other and how a revision of a work only produces interest in the differences between it and the original.

The two essential weaknesses in such an approach are in the assumption that the canny old narrator of the prefaces is simple enough to engage himself and his readers in a straightforward project to impose unity and efface multiplicity, and in an assumption that when the prefacer writes autobiography he is dealing in facts rather than fiction. Suspicious approaches are very likely to be a reaction, not to the text of the New York Edition itself, but to what David McWhirter refers to as its "long time function as a cornerstone in the cultural and ideological construction of 'Henry James' – the 'Henry James' who has come to represent the quintessential high-modernist priest of art, the creator of an art of fiction committed to pure form" (McWhirter 2). This construction has its real roots in early critical accolades such as Percy Lubbock's *Times Literary Supplement* review, in which he crowns the New York Edition as "the first event" in the history of the novel (Lubbock 8). McWhirter notes that "Lubbock sets the tone for later New Critical valorizations (and consequent simplifications) of the Edition by insisting on its seamless structural coherence and by identifying the essential figure in the Edition's carpet as James's 'gradual solution of the problem of form'" (McWhirter 2).

If one is willing, however, to read this preface with the kind of attention required by James's late fiction – tuned to differences in authorial voice, to vocal mixtures, to the distance between narrator and narrative – then one is in a position to

understand the relation of preface and novel in a more sophisticated and productive way. Such an approach to reading this preface allows a harmonizing of what appears to be an extradiegetic account of ideals and creative experience with the intradiegetic account of Isabel Archer's experience. Approaching the preface in this manner introduces to the process a productive multiplicity, in which several narrators work from multiple temporal positions and generate relations from those positions. These relations can be various – antagonistic, mutually supportive, apparently friendly but revealed to be undermining, etc. It is from within this matrix of relations that the Jamesian narrator most effectively communicates, not from some removed extradiegetic location. Thus the preface operates in the same way as does the novel – through the multiplication of subjective positions and a description of their experienced relations in time. It is possible to view the preface, not as an extradiegetic analysis working on the novel, but as another text with explicit intertextual relations to the novel. The primary mode of relation between preface and novel is one of re-presentation in which the story of the creative process repeats, with telling differences, essential elements of Isabel Archer's story. The narrative stance within the relational matrix of the preface becomes applicable to understandings of the novel and vice-versa. The preface is James's way of reintroducing himself into the representational economy of the novel. Reading the preface as fiction – reading the autobiographical account of the young James as one reads the fictional account of Isabel Archer – requires an attention alert enough to determine the narrator's relations to an array of other narrators, characters, and events. This kind of attention enables an understanding of the New York Edition as a project of expansion rather than containment.

Reading the novel and preface as harmonized allows one to drop the burden of antagonism toward the authorial project, and join a vital, self-aware narrator in the

midst of some very interesting play. A critical reading of the preface and novel together can generate a more detailed and variable account of both texts and their relation – an account in which the narrator, rather than being intent on producing an idea of *The Portrait of a Lady* as one story and as a perfect link in the chain of one author's mastery, is rendering the novel as a stage – a theatrical space – for a multiply-authored process with ever-abundant possibilities. If one wants any specific information about this process, one does, however, have to locate the narrator at work in the narrative moment, and then determine that narrator's relation to the part of the narrative in question. At times the task of determining this relation can seem like locating the original in a hall of mirrors, but time after time one finds that the distinctions between narrator and reflections are clearly, if subtly, laid out for the reader. Getting a working sense of the narrative position is more, however, than just a matter of sorting through a complex network of representation. The narrators of both preface and novel regularly work to make the identification of narrator-reflector distinctions difficult. The primary mode in both texts is to create a tide of affect and sheer interest which operates against such a reading. It can be very difficult, while being carried and even challenged by characters' speech, actions, positions and workings of consciousness, to keep an ear open to the voice that reveals the current narrative location – and relation to what is narrated. It is essential, however, to be continually aware of this dialogue within these texts. It might be possible in a different text – one that resolves its problems internally – to pay less attention to the narrative positioning within the action, but within these texts it is not possible to generate a coherent reading without a clear understanding of how the narrator gives and takes it.

This impossibility is most simply demonstrated by considering the end of the novel. The answers to the questions, "Why does she return to Rome?" and "What is

she thinking?” are not answerable without reference to the narrative positioning throughout. Readings – and this accounts for most on this question – which understand Isabel’s final move as one of resignation, failure, unhappy accommodation, as a tragic loss of self, must come to terms with narrative statements early on in the plot which appear to predict her success and with the apparent final optimism of those characters who know her best. An optimistic reading must of course deal with the dramatic horror of her life in Rome, and with a lack of direct guidance from the narrator. The prefacer’s relation to the account of his younger self’s initial ideas about the novel can serve as the model for how to read narrative positioning throughout both the preface and the novel. The information thus gained can then facilitate understandings of the action, mode of representation, and the narrative’s relation to the rest of the New York Edition.

Just as in the preface to *The American*, the prefacer sets up a homological relation between the story of how the young author wrote the novel and the story of the protagonist in the novel. The basic structure of this homological relation is exactly the same as the structure of the relation between the idea of Newman and Newman’s ideas about himself. In the preface to *The American*, the prefacer confesses that his mistake was in attempting to create a consistent character. This mistake is aligned with Newman’s mistake in maintaining his own rigid consistency with respect to the Bellegardes and their culture. As a result, the young author fails to create a realistic plot and the character fails to achieve the realization of his desire. In the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, the naiveté of the young author who believes in his vision of a female character, fully existent prior to plotting, can be aligned with the naiveté of Isabel Archer who would like to fully develop her consciousness free of relational constraints. In both prefaces, the prefacer is careful to introduce the notion that the autobiographical account is not to be thought of as factual, that the account is subject

to the intentionally selective memory of the prefacer. The fictionalization of the accounts in the prefaces render them even more identical with the fictional accounts in the novels – and therefore more available for the transferral of information across the narrative boundaries. The prefacer narrates the authorial dilemma so that it aligns perfectly with Isabel's:

Trying to recover here, for recognition, the germ of my idea, I see that it must have consisted not at all in any conceit of a "plot," nefarious name, in any flash, upon the fancy, of a set of relations, or in any one of those situations that, by a logic of their own, immediately fall, for the fabulist, into movement, into a march or a rush, a patter of quick steps; but altogether in the sense of a single character, the character and aspect of a particularly engaging young woman, to which all the usual elements of a "subject," certainly of a setting were to need to be super-added. (3:vi, vii; AN 42)

The most obvious purpose of this recollection is to elicit some sympathy with a young author who is enamoured of his female character. The prefacer writes that he had been "in complete possession of it...for a long time," and coyly refuses to say how he came by it – that it is a story "not here to be retraced" (3:xi; AN 47). The prefacer creates an engaging little romantic drama in which the gallant young author holds the virginal character back from the onrush of relations. This status of this drama is, however, carefully qualified by the narrator. The account can't be taken as fact, as the prefacer deliberately works to undermine the truth value of this story. Doing this aligns the account with Isabel's account of herself in the novel, and also works to undermine the affective force of the little memoir. I might be able to wholeheartedly engage in sympathy for the young author and his character as remembered by his old self, but I might be a little less willing to commit myself if I know that the old prefacer

is, to some extent at least, making it up. To note the possibility that this story is somehow “worked,” is to be alerted to the possibility that it is inhabited by the ubiquitous Jamesian irony. This little interaction, between the narrator’s representation of the young author’s ideas and his qualification of those ideas, represents a dynamic which is to be repeated, writ large and small, throughout these two texts.

The narrative qualifications, however clearly expressed, are uttered before, within or after another discourse – a discourse that carries a great deal more affective force. Compare the hesitant, quiet tone of the beginning phrases, in which he is “Trying to recover, for recognition, the germ of my idea, I see that it must have consisted...,” to the drama of what ensues. He conjures first a noisy negative horde of terms and images; “conceit,” “plot,” “nefarious name,” “flash,” “fancy,” “immediately fall,” “fabulist,” “movement,” “march,” “rush,” “patter of quick steps,” and then in contrast and in exchange produces the limpid vision of his engaging character (3:vi, vii; *AN* 42). It is as if one is witnessing the Huns riding down on a young Madonna. In the sheer experience of reading this dramatic account of how the vision of the maiden herself sufficed in the place where an army is usually required, it is easy to imagine that the teller is also caught up in and directly underwriting the account. The qualifications, however, suggest that the narrator is trying to assemble the past from clues, and that he has no sure, direct access to the historical facts. His story is, by his own admission, unreliable. It is not a simple narrative situation. If it were fact, one could ground its value and meaning in its direct connection to a communally-verifiable reality, but since its not necessarily fact, one must subject it to the same system as the rest of James’s texts.

The autobiographical account in the preface is subject to James’s relational view of reality in which any given account of experience has reference for

understanding not to one underlying or more fundamental account, but to any number of other accounts of experience. The validity of the account does derive from its actual relation to experience, or as he puts it, “the measure of the worth of a given subject” is dependent on whether it is “the result of some direct impression or perception of life” (3:ix; *AN* 45). However, if this account is to have relevance, if it is to produce some understanding, it must have reference to something other than the impression or perception which caused it, because for James that experience might be equally “fictional.” Indeed the only way to determine the status of, to meaningfully read, any account is to compare it, to listen for how it harmonizes, with other accounts.

The preface tells a creation story in which the entire novel has sprung cleanly from a single vision of the consciousness and character of a young woman, without compromising itself through involvement in pre-existing forms such as plots or sets of social relations. In the novel, Isabel Archer wants to be able to tell the same kind of story about herself. In Chapter VI, James gives us a sketch of Isabel’s psychology and ideology. It is the narrator’s most vivid, direct, and extended comment on these subjects. It is also where we can find the tide of affect and interest in Isabel’s charming self and prospects undercut by the narrator’s general ironic reserve and speculations regarding the possibility that she may be misguided. In contrast, throughout much of the novel, the job of promoting or critiquing Isabel’s character and ideas is left to other characters – and the narrative reservations are more subtly presented, or are implicit in the choice to remain silent. As the narrator gives us Isabel’s ideas about herself, he approves of her and at the same time ridicules her ideas about who she is. The irony is that Isabel’s thoughts about her own originality and self-sufficiency, as well as her conceptions about the world she encounters, are not only mixed-up, “a tangle of vague outlines which has never been corrected by the judgment of people speaking with authority,” they are not in the least original (*PL*

1:67). Indeed, the narrator tells us that in her tendency toward free self expression she is one of “the mass of American girls” (*PL* 1:74). One of the remarkable features of this novel is the way that most readers are inclined from the outset to enjoy and to cheer on this protagonist in the face of the narrator’s criticism of her character and philosophy, for not only does he make it clear that her ideas are confused and conventional, he also gives out that she is self-centered and downright wrong about things. As if to clear himself of any implication that he is performing some sleight of hand, he puts his cards on the table as a narrator with clear intentions, admitting that “she would be an easy victim of scientific criticism if she were not intended to awaken on the reader’s part an impulse more tender and purely expectant” (*PL* 1:69). Here we are advised that, though Isabel is confused, conventional, self-centered, and wrong, we are to like her and expect good things of her.

Curiously enough, in both cases – that of the author who begins with the wholly sufficient vision of the character’s consciousness and that of the character that begins with an idea that her consciousness is wholly sufficient – the direct result, of beginning without form, is a highly formalized environment. This dynamic also parallels the one in *The American* and its preface, where consistency in character deportment and development lead to unexpected failure rather than predictable success. In the case of the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, once the narrator has given us this idea of the vision as sufficient origin, he embarks on a description of his writing process and the result of it which employs as its primary metaphor a very meticulously planned and constructed edifice. The very informality of his “subject” appears to require that its treatment be exceptionally formal and situated. The impetus for the move toward formalizing this vision is so strong that even as he reflects on the purity of his initial conception, the prefacer admits to inadvertently veering off into a consideration of the resulting structure. “I have lost myself,” he writes, “once more, I

confess, in the curiosity of analyzing the structure” (3: xvi; *AN* 52). Within this creation account, James readily “confesses” to having been intensely concerned with the “placement” of this subject. The actual placement is represented in various ways resulting in an over-determination of situation. The subject is at one time “this single small corner-stone” with which he begins to construct “the large building of ‘The Portrait of a Lady’”(3:xvi; *AN* 52). In the very next sentence he has the “square and spacious house...put up round my young woman while she stood there in perfect isolation” (3:xvi; *AN* 52). He writes. “I would build large – in fine embossed vaults and painted arches, as who should say, and yet never let it appear that the chequered pavement, the ground under the reader’s feet fails to stretch at every point to the base of the walls” (3:xvi; *AN* 52). Just as Isabel Archer is bound to be trapped in her fine Roman palace, the initial vision of her is bound to be trapped in the fine structure of the novel.

Despite what appears to be an overwhelming urge to entrap his vision within the form of the novel, the young author is remembered as working to render this vision as sufficient unto itself. The prefacer recalls an anxiety about whether or not his precious vision alone would be enough to interest prospective readers. He asks, “By what process of logical accretion was this slight ‘personality,’ the mere slim shade of an intelligent but presumptuous girl, to find herself with the high attributes of a Subject?” (3:xii, xiii; *AN* 48). The young James decides to approach the process of “doing” a female protagonist by placing “the centre of the subject in the young woman’s own consciousness” (3:xv; *AN* 51). He will emphasize “the young woman’s consciousness,” or “her relation to herself,” at the expense of “the consciousness of [her] satellites,” or “her relation to those surrounding her” (3:xv; *AN* 51). He wants to “press least hard, in short, on the consciousness of your heroine’s satellites, especially the male” (3:xv; *AN* 51). In this way, the vision may be able to carry itself forward

into the set of relations without being narratively formed from without. This attempt to allow the character to present herself is, however, undermined in various ways. Any confidence in Isabel's ability to present herself is undermined by the narrator's critique of just that ability. How is a reader to understand the subject of the novel through the consciousness of a character whose perspective is given as fundamentally flawed? In addition, the action of the novel proves that what Isabel thinks doesn't really matter in any positive way. The action is driven, not by what Isabel thinks, but by what others think of her. Her move from New York to England, her acquisition of riches, and her marriage are all brought about by others who are not motivated by her perspectives, ideas, and wishes, but by their own. Much of what happens to her in the novel happens without her even knowing about it.

This story in the preface, then, while it may work to highlight the important features of Isabel's dilemma, doesn't resolve it. The original vision – the one that the young author is working to protect from the forms and relations that would compromise its integrity – is doomed from the beginning. It is not only doomed by virtue of its necessary embodiment in the structure of the novel, but also because its creator and protector is also its enthusiastic jailer. It thus only repeats Isabel's impossible situation in which she is doomed to inhabit a marital prison, in which her own ideas about freedom expose her to, even draw her into, the plots of those who would bind her to their own ends.

There is, however, another story, and another metaphor at work in the preface. Worked in and around the metaphor of the unsullied vision as the origin of the novel, is a figure familiar to anyone who has read the prefaces – the figure of the germ. The prefacer uses the figure of the germ throughout the prefaces, but it does its most effective work here with *The Portrait of a Lady*. Here the prefacer uses the germ as part of a larger organic metaphor, of a luxuriant growth whose extent exceeds the

bounds of the novel. He presents this figure right after the figure of the feminine vision, with no indication that they are in any way at odds with each other:

Quite as interesting as the young woman herself, at her best, do I find, I must again repeat, this projection of memory upon the whole matter of the growth, in one's imagination, of some such apology for a motive. These are the fascinations of the fabulist's art, these lurking forces of expansion, these necessities of upspringing in the seed, these beautiful determinations on the part of the idea entertained, to grow as tall as possible, to push into the light and the air and thickly flower there; and, quite as much, these fine possibilities of recovering, from some good standpoint on the ground gained, the intimate history of the business – of retracing and reconstructing its steps and stages. (3:vii; AN 42)

Though the prefacer admits his interest in the preceding vision metaphor, he indicates that this figure belongs in a different category. The idea that the novel sprung fully formed in the young author's mind is carefully contained in an unreliable past – it belongs to the young author. The prefacer doesn't claim it, he only posits it as something he can infer from unnamed clues. The organic growth metaphor, in contrast, reaches from before the conception of the novel, up through time to where the prefacer stands. The suggestion is even that the prefacer himself has reached his place by climbing with the growth – that he too has made it up into the light where he can review the progress of what appears to be more than the history of *The Portrait of a Lady*, of what now looks more like a life's work. Furthermore, in a reflexive move, he is pointing out the value of attending to the autobiographical elements in the prefaces. What he finds interesting, as interesting as the young author's – and therefore Isabel Archer's – dilemma, is the "projection of [his] memory" (3:vii; AN

42). The prefacer is drawing attention to the prefaces as creative acts the subject of which is “the growth, in one’s imagination” (3:vii; AN 42).

The figures of the germ and of growth bring with them the ideas of genealogy, of precedents and relation. The prefacer turns to these questions in his account of how his friend Turgenieff understands “the usual origin of the fictive picture” (3:vii; AN 42). Turgenieff, too, claims to have character visions and at the same time to understand the origin as a germ. The prefacer recounts his old friend’s ideas on the origin of the germ itself:

As for the origin of one’s wind-blown germs themselves, who shall say, as you ask, where *they* come from? We have to go too far back, too far behind, to say. Isn’t it all we can say that they are *there* at almost every turn of the road? They accumulate, and we are always picking them over, selecting among them. They are the breath of life – by which I mean that life, in its own way, breathes them upon us. They are so, in a manner prescribed and imposed – floated into our minds by the current of life. (3:viii; AN 43)⁶

While the figure of the feminine vision is self-originating in the imagination of the young author, the figure of the germ has such a long history that it is effectively untraceable. It is clear, however, that this background is organic and rich, that the artist has but to open himself up to what the wind and the currents bring, or to scoop them up from where they are piled.

Bringing in Ivan Turgenieff as a guest speaker on the subject underscores the idea of artistic imagination as implicated in a kind of genealogy – that one’s inspirations are connected to one’s artistic forebears – as Turgenieff served as a novelist-father figure to the young James. As seeds come from other plants, so ideas

⁶ The italics are James’s.

come from other thinkers. At the same time that the prefacer figures the idea of Isabel as ethereally self-generated and original, in his discussion of the practicalities involved in rendering her, he embodies her and connects her to a host of literary antecedents:

Challenge any such problem with any intelligence, and you immediately see how full it is of substance; the wonder being, all the while, as we look at the world, how absolutely, how inordinately, the Isabel Archers, and even much smaller female fry, insist on mattering. George Eliot has admirably noted it – ‘In these frail vessels is borne outward through the ages the treasure of human affection.’ In ‘Romeo and Juliet; Juliet has to be important, just as, in ‘Adam Bede,’ and ‘The Mill on the Floss’ and Middlemarch’ and ‘Daniel Deronda,’ Hetty Sorrel and Maggie Tulliver and Rosamond Vincy, and Gwendolyn Harleth have to be; with that much of firm ground, that much of bracing air, at the disposal all the while of their feet and their lungs.

(3:xiii; *AN* 49)

Note the trouble that the prefacer has gone to so that this family of women is rendered organic and materially substantive. These are not just visions, these are material and biological beings. They are not just important, they “matter.” They are “full of substance.” Their connections to each other are rooted in the common ground they stand on, and their numbers are increased through the inclusion of “Cleopatras and Portias” (3:xiv; *AN* 49). The young author, as a participant in the organic process, whose “prime sensibility,” is figured as “the soil out of which his subject springs,” also comes into a like relation with other authors (3:x; *AN* 45). In addition to Turgeneff, Eliot and Shakespeare he is related, through their approach to the craft of characterization, to “Dickens and Walter Scott,” as well as “R. L. Stevenson” (3:xiii; *AN* 49). The germ metaphor works to integrate the novel and its origins within a

densely populated literary genealogy that envelops and situates the otherwise ethereal vision. Indeed, the prefacer remembers the young author as gaining, from Turgeneff's account of his own practices, the courage to go forward with his vision: "So this beautiful genius, and I recall with comfort the gratitude I drew from his reference to the intensity of suggestion that may reside in the stray figure, the unattached character, the image *en disponibilité*" (3:viii; AN 44). In a curious formulation, the unattached vision is given the right to exist as a germ – which suggests, if not another kind of attachment, a clear relation to other things: "[Turgeneff's reference] gave me higher warrant than I seemed then to have met for just that blest habit of one's own imagination, the trick of investing some conceived or encountered individual, some brace or group of individuals, with the germinal property and authority" (3:viii; AN 44). Through the relation of the vision to the germ, the vision is given place, time, and the right to be there.

The tensions between the unattached character and her literary family are perhaps best understood through the idea that the young author is doing something radically new with this character when he allows her to present herself, rather than presenting her through other characters. The prefacer tells us that it is difficult to make young women the center of interest, the subject, of novels – presumably because they do not occupy such a central position within the general cultural imagination – and that when they are the subject of interest in a novel, that interest must be assisted through the use of numerous plotting devices. He writes that Shakespeare's and Eliot's "concession to the 'importance of their Juliets and Cleopatras and Portias (even with Portia as the very type and model of the young person intelligent and presumptuous) and to that of their Hettys and Maggies and Rosamonds and Gwendolens, suffers the abatement that these slimnesses are, when figuring as the main props of the theme, never suffered to be the sole ministers of its appeal, but have

their inadequacy eked out with comic relief and underplots, as the playwrights say, when not with murders and battles and the great mutations of the world” (3:xiv; AN 49, 50). The prefacer is taking exception here to the way in which the story of the female character in these fictions is related to the stories of others and to the historical world at large. There is a clear example of what he means in Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, where before we have access to Dorothea Casaubon’s pathetic experience of her honeymoon we must pass through a series of enclosing and positioning circles:

When George the Fourth was still reigning over the privacies of Windsor, when the Duke of Wellington was Prime Minister, and Mr Vincy was mayor of the old corporation in Middlemarch, Mrs Casaubon, born Dorothea Brooke, had taken her wedding journey to Rome. (Eliot 120)

One must then pass through the boundary of another perspective, that of Naumann and Ladislaw, before we get her perspective; we must see her as a work of art, an object of aesthetic appreciation among other objects in the Vatican. Though the following chapter is a remarkable piece of represented interiority as Dorothea meditates on her disillusionment with respect to her husband and the reality of her marriage, it must be pre-positioned relative to a masculine history and accessed through the gaze of specific male characters. It is interesting that Dorothea is not included among the list that our narrator provides of heroines who have mattered and yet were not the allowed to carry the primary burden of interest. He gives us Rosamond Vincy instead as the representative “frail vessel,” – he uses Eliot’s term – from *Middlemarch*. It is interesting because the dynamic of Dorothea’s relationship with Casaubon – beginning with an ill-conceived idealization of a hollow man and ending in disillusionment and perceived entrapment – bears too much resemblance to that of Isabel’s to be ignored. The subject, imagery, and tone of the chapter in which Isabel meditates on the way in

which her illusions have been extinguished, is a repetition, enacted with crucial differences, inversions, of the chapter in which Dorothea does the same. Perhaps it is another occasion on which James finds it too vulgar to point directly at his object. Vulgarity being for James a term which not only denotes a lack of refinement, but more specifically a clumsiness in presentation or representation. At any rate what we can derive from a layering of Eliot's and James's accounts of young women in the act of disillusionment is the understanding that the centralizing of consciousness in the female heroine is more than mere technique – it is layered into the more traditional and often treated theme of “a young woman affronting her destiny” on her own terms (3:xii; AN 48). Those who would take the young author at his word, so to speak, and expect that Isabel will introduce and present herself, will be set right in the very first pages of the novel. Before Isabel is allowed to even appear, she is situated on the bank of the Thames, near an old house with a history – it had once sheltered Queen Elizabeth – and is discussed in the abstract by three rich men. Her very character is presaged in their conversation as they wonder whether she is “interesting” and “independent” (*PL* 1:13). When she does appear, it is through their perspective. Thus, the woman who is to speak for herself, who wishes to invent herself free of material and social constraints, and who is supposed to be the focalizer, appears already situated within a landscape, a history and a male-dominated perspective. Within these first few pages, Isabel's dilemma is already established.

The germ metaphor situates the otherwise impossibly conflicted vision metaphor, and it at the same time suggests that something similar could be done with Isabel's dilemma in the novel. Isabel would like to invent herself without social and historical constraints. If she is going to be self-invented, she must understand her past, her family history as somehow irrelevant, and she doesn't make much use of it in her interactions with the other characters. She is aided in this by the Touchetts, who are

dismissive of her family background. The reason that Isabel has not known this branch of the family – Mrs. Touchett is her mother’s sister – is that Mrs. Touchett disapproved of Isabel’s father. Isabel’s mother died when Isabel was young, and the aunt refused to communicate with the father. Mrs. Touchett’s initial visit and her subsequent invitation for Isabel to come to England with her, are now possible due to the father’s death. Though the overall movement of the action in the novel doesn’t allow it much play, there is a clear familial, genetic, explanation for Isabel’s need to be free. She is simply following in her father’s footsteps. The father that her aunt disapproved of “had squandered a substantial fortune, had been deplorably convivial,” and “was known to have gambled freely” (*PL* 1:43). He had considered Isabel to be “his clever, his superior, his remarkable girl,” and had shown her “all sorts of indulgence” (*PL* 1:44). He “wished his daughters, even as children, to see as much of the world as possible; and it was for this purpose that, before Isabel was fourteen, he had transported them three times across the Atlantic” (*PL* 1:44).

It is clear that Isabel’s thinking was in accordance with her father’s – for “when her father had left his daughters for three months at Neufchatel with a French *bonne* who had eloped with a Russian nobleman staying at the same hotel – even in this irregular situation (an incident of the girl’s eleventh year) she had been neither frightened nor ashamed, but had thought it a romantic episode in a romantic education” (*PL* 1:43). Neither the narrator nor the other characters make much connection between the example of Isabel’s father and her own behavior, but with some encouragement from the relations between the metaphors in the preface, it is easy to see that Isabel comes by her approach to life honestly, so to speak. Like her father, she is very sure of her own decisions, doesn’t take direction well, believes in enlarging her consciousness through travel, and is uninterested in financial prudence.

Her zest for freedom, her need to be unattached, is better understood, gains meaning, through her relation to her father.

Likewise, her philosophy is not sprung entirely unassisted out of her own mind. Though Isabel likes to think of her thinking as original, in reality it, too, has its origins beyond her self. In the absence of regular schooling, the “foundation of her knowledge was really laid in the idleness of her grandmother’s house, where, as most of the other inmates were not reading people, she had uncontrolled use of a library full of books with frontispieces, which she used to climb upon a chair to take down” (*PL* 1:29). In the absence of parental or other guidance, “she was guided in her selection chiefly by the frontispiece” (*PL* 1:29, 30). Though there are few specific references – beyond a mention of a “history of German Thought” that she has assigned herself to read as a corrective to what she has determined to be a “vagabond” mind – to the subjects of her reading, one can draw quite reasonable conclusions concerning what she’s retained from this reading as a knowledge base and philosophy (*PL* 1:31). The fact that in this house few people are readers and also that the books are all presentation volumes with frontispieces suggest that the library was the personal collection of her grandfather, and that he was acquainted with the authors. Isabel’s education is thus received as a direct inheritance from him. The library and the office in which she reads date to an undetermined period, but are described in terms that suggest a romantically-inspired childhood experience of them. The office is a “chamber of disgrace for old pieces of furniture whose infirmities were not always apparent (so that the disgrace seemed unmerited and rendered them victims of injustice) and with which, in the manner of children, she had established relations almost human, certainly dramatic” (*PL* 1:30). Mrs. Touchett finds her niece still ensconced within this realm of juvenile reading and fantasy – she has not changed her basic modes of understanding. In her conversations with Mr. Touchett on specifics of

English culture, we are told that “she usually enquired whether they corresponded with the descriptions in the books” (*PL* 1:75). Isabel’s initial approaches to English and European culture suggest that her reading material has included a generous sampling of romantic novels. Of the English people she says, “I don’t believe they are very nice to girls; they’re not nice to them in the novels” (*PL* 1:76). When informed of the identity of Lord Warburton, she cries, “I hoped there would be a lord; it’s just like a novel!”, and after spending a little time with Warburton “she scarce fell short of seeing him – though quite without luridity – as a hero of romance” (*PL* 1:18, 91).

It has also become commonly accepted among critical readers of this novel that her philosophy is a rather simplistic version of Emerson’s early thought. W.C. Brownell, in a contemporary review, already compared reading the philosophical elements of the novel with the “sensation in first becoming acquainted with undisguisedly philosophical writings such as the writings of Emerson” (Brownell 102). Millicent Bell has noted that James “has dared to make her a spokeswoman for the powerful romantic strain in his native culture expressed in Emerson’s exaltation of the singular self with its scorn for ‘circumstance’” (Bell 90). Isabel conceives of herself in an Emersonian sense, casting out circles of perception into a potentially unrestricted infinity from a center that is her original, unconditioned, self. In order for Isabel to conceive of personal or character development, of life, as ideally expanding out from the self in a circle of infinitely expanding waves, she must posit herself as original, for a central point has no place from which it can have come. It is surrounded by its effects. Here is how Emerson’s figures an ideal life in his 1841 essay “Circles”:

The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end. The extent to which this generation of

circles, wheel without wheel, will go, depends on the force or truth of the individual soul. For it is the inert effort of each thought, having formed itself into a circular wave of circumstance, – as for instance an empire, rules of an art, a local usage, a religious rite, – to heap itself on that ridge and to solidify and hem in the life. But if the soul is quick and strong it bursts over that boundary on all sides and expands another orbit on the great deep, which also runs up into a high wave, with attempt again to stop and to bind. But the heart refuses to be imprisoned; in its first and narrowest pulses it already tends outward with a vast force and to immense and innumerable expansions.

(Emerson 26)

Here are Isabel's thoughts as she contemplates Lord Warburton's offer of marriage:

What she felt was that a territorial, a political, a social magnate had conceived the design of drawing her into the system in which he invidiously lived and moved. A certain instinct, not imperious, but persuasive, told her to resist – murmured to her that virtually she had a system and an orbit of her own. (*PL* 1:144)

Here is a situation with a beginning and a potentially infinite future, but without a past. The imagined author gives us a source-less vision, and Emerson gives a similar one. His only comment in this context is to begin his essay, "The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end" (Emerson 25). Here is Isabel, as focalized through her cousin Ralph Touchett, who incidentally is a fan of her independent philosophy: he sees her "looking at everything, with an eye that denoted clear perception – at her companion, at the two dogs, at the two gentlemen under the trees, at the beautiful scene that surrounded her" (*PL* 1:18). Ralph's wish is that Isabel and her vision will continue to

expand out into the world; it is to this end that he convinces his father to leave a fortune to her. He registers her success as breaking over and beyond successive attempts to encircle her with a marriage ring. Isabel's idea of herself, as well as Ralph's idea of her, is that of an original with a limitless future:

She had a desire to leave the past behind her and, as she said to herself, to begin afresh. This desire indeed was not a birth of the present occasion; it was as familiar as the sound of rain upon the window and it had led to her beginning afresh a great many times. (*PL* 1:41)

In positing an absolute beginning and an infinite future, this idea of the individual transcends the temporal reality, which proceeds out of the past and disappears into the future. Inherent in this reality are beginnings and that which comes before them, as well as endings and that which follows them. It is a human dimension in which people with ancestors are born, die, and leave descendents. This is the reality that Isabel would like to transcend.

Novels and the narrators of them deal in time, however, and with the limitless reality of relations from the present into both the past and the future. As the prefacer asserts in the aforementioned passage from the preface to *Roderick Hudson*, "Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within they shall happily *appear* to do so" (*I*:vii; *AN* 5). Though the narrator draws a circle in which the action of the novel takes place, he also explicitly acknowledges that this circle has been drawn and that there is a fictional reality outside its bounds. It is beyond the scope of this study to do more than gesture at some of the ways in which this novel exceeds the bounds of its action, but the fact is that it does so to a greater extent and in more ways than any of James's other works. In terms of the narrator's account of Isabel's consciousness as it moves through time, we get to look over the line of the circle into the past, and

though it is a tantalizingly dim and mediated view, we also get to peek into her future. The trick that this narrator has played is to suggest, through foregrounding and “covertly” promoting Isabel’s conception of herself, that she is in some way as she and others say she is – original and potentially infinite – while at the same time laying her life and mind out on a temporal line. Isabel’s circle is contained within the narrative circle in that hers, when rotated into the temporal dimension, shows itself as a cone viewed from the side with the point at her arrival in England and the base widening and fading out into the future. It does not extend into her past, and we know that though theoretically its expansion is unlimited, on this axis its widening is limited to the period before her marriage to Osmond. Its forward temporal reach is that of the narrative itself. The prefacer would have us understand, however, that Isabel is not just what she thinks she is, or even what the young author of the novel might like to think she is. He understands this, understands his character “in motion and, so to speak, in transit” (3: xi; *AN* 47). Isabel is in motion from her past, from her genealogical and literary past, to her future, embodied in new characters and future works.

In order to understand her as in motion toward a viable future rather than spiraling back into her prison, one must come to terms with her own understanding of herself in relation to others. What the preface tells us is that the conscious creation, the rendering of the subject, is inextricable from that rendered. The subject, then, as we encounter it, is not just the relation of vision to matter, or the individual to social context, nor is it even just the conscious experience of relating vision to matter. It is, in its fullest expression, the understanding of (or failing to understand) through the rendering of (or failure to render) the conscious experience of relating vision to matter, ideals to life, individual to social context. One of the things that the interactions of the preface’s metaphors can tell us about the novel is that the mis-rendering of the relation

(or as we shall see, the inability to render the consciousness of the relation) between ideals and life lived is not in the end necessarily disastrous; that it may indeed be a stage in the progress toward a fuller consciousness and an improved rendering of that relation. Though, as we have seen, the original vision story in the preface is treated with a certain amount of undermining irony, there is no indication that the end result must be considered a failure in the sense that the vision of the imagined young author finds itself eternally trapped within the form of the novel. The prefacer does not in essence agree with Casper Goodwood, who asks Isabel near the end, “Why should you go back – why should you go through that ghastly form?” (*PL* 2:433). Our narrator has gone back through several revisions and the preface – and still delights in going through the – continually refigured – form.

One can take up the narrator’s hint in a very general way, as an indication that perhaps it would be good to revisit the idea that at the end of the novel Isabel is returning to “go through that ghastly form,” with – and again I’ll use Goodwood’s terms – “the deadliest of fiends” (*PL* 2:432). Isabel’s Emersonian ideals, and the resulting ideas about who she is, are inadequate for a working understanding of her situation at the outset of the novel’s action. The implication is already that she herself is not the best interpreter of the ensuing events. Isabel cannot be relied upon to render them adequately.

The metaphor of the germ also introduces, as a corollary of the ideas about genealogy and family, the idea of reproduction – specifically sexual desire. In order to have any understanding of how Isabel got herself mixed up with a fellow like Gilbert Osmond, it’s necessary to return to Chapter VI, and pick up the other thing – besides her idealism – that our narrator has to say about the young girl’s psychology. Though he begins the chapter, “Isabel Archer was a young person of many theories,” and though much of his analysis and irony is employed in an accounting for and

presentation of these theories, he does say something else about her (*PL* 1:66). This bit could be missed as it is couched in the lighter discourse about her silly ideas, but if noted it has a rather ominous ring especially in the atmosphere of later events. He begins in the tone which dominates the chapter: “Of course, among her theories, this young lady was not without a collection of views on the subject of marriage. The first on the list was a conviction of the vulgarity of thinking too much about it” (*PL* 1:71). He goes on in this manner for a few sentences ending with: “Few of the men she saw seemed worth a ruinous expenditure, and it made her smile to think that one of them should present himself as an incentive to hope and a reward of patience” (*PL* 1:71). At this point there is a sudden drop in the tone as the next two sentences deliver the essential information with a serious chill: “Deep in her soul – it was the deepest thing there – lay a belief that if a certain light should dawn she could give herself completely; but this image, on the whole, was too formidable to be attractive. Isabel’s thoughts hovered about it, but they seldom rested on it long; after a little it ended in alarms” (*PL* 1:71, 72). We have it, in the narrator’s unmediated voice, that Isabel’s deepest motivation has to do with the fulfillment of erotic desire; and also that she is unable to maintain consciousness of that motivation, that she is unwilling, afraid, to fully recognize and acknowledge it. Within this chapter, then, the narrator gives us the two motivations, embodied negatively in the characters of Warburton and Goodwood, that drive Isabel into the hands of Osmond. The first is the desire to escape the constraints of a recognizable social positioning, of being fixed in relation to another and others – this potential constraint comes in the form of a proposal from Warburton. Ironically, what makes him interesting – his social status and his landed wealth – is what undermines his appeal. The second is deeper and arguably produces the first, in that the cloud of ill-conceived theories working against constraint and marriage are likely a cover for the deeper fear that she will give into her erotic desire and lose

herself in a lover. Though this narrator does not regularly address this deeper motivation, it is relentlessly embodied in the descriptions of Goodwood and his effects on Isabel. Though Goodwood is possibly ugly, and though he does have a respectable fortune – more acceptable to Isabel for having been earned – his mode of attraction, the thing that makes his appeal ultimately unacceptable, is erotic. Isabel's consideration of him – before he actually appears on the scene at Gardencourt – is expressed with distinctly sexual overtones: "There was a disagreeably strong push, a kind of hardness of presence, in his way of rising before her" (*PL* 1:162). Warburton offers himself in conjunction with his properties and position; Goodwood's proposals are brutally passionate, entirely personal. Warburton's appeal is initially rejected, but Isabel has left herself the option to change her mind. What ultimately dooms his prospects is Isabel's unexpected inheritance from Daniel Touchett, arranged by Ralph precisely to enable her to avoid the necessity of such a marriage. While Isabel in the balance would not accept the privileges and confines of a high social position, she wouldn't mind being rich – when Madame Merle tells her, "I wish you had a little money," Isabel quickly and artlessly responds with, "I wish I had!" (*PL* 1:290).

Touchett's bequest disengages Isabel's desire for money from the marriage question and thus allows her to entirely dismiss the lord's suit, but Goodwood's insistent, erotic, elemental power is harder for her to resist. She knows that she will not easily be done with him. The narrator notes, as he takes us through her history with and attitudes toward this suitor, "Sometimes Caspar Goodwood had seemed to range himself on the side of her destiny, to be the stubbornest fact she knew; she said to herself at some moments that she might evade him for a time, but that she must make terms with him at last – terms which would be certain to be favourable to himself" (*PL* 1:162). In her initial rejection of Warburton's offer, Isabel had recourse to her reading, to her education. It is clear that she employed her Transcendental

ideology as she turned him down. It is her romantic ideology, her very personal interpretation of the knight in shining armor, that comes alive in the person of Goodwood: “It pleased Isabel to believe that he might have ridden, on a plunging steed, the whirlwind of a great war – a war like the Civil strife that had overdarkened her conscious childhood and his ripening youth...she saw the different fitted parts of him as she had seen, in museums and portraits, the different fitted parts of armoured warriors – in plates of steel handsomely inlaid with gold” (*PL* 1:164, 165). When he looks at her it is, the narrator tells us, as if “through a vizard of a helmet” (*PL* 1:218). His sword, so to speak, again cuts both ways. The intensity for her of his personal appeal, underwritten by and in part composed of ideas drawn from romantic literature, is ultimately what scares her off.

Her character and her situation now demand Gilbert Osmond. Marrying him resolves, it seems, neatly the problem of Goodwood’s threat to tap her desire. Though Isabel is sure that Osmond loves her, he does not pursue her directly, and whatever desire he may feel for her is packaged in aesthetic appreciation. There is no mention of any purely erotic desire on the part of Osmond, and the narrator suggests that any indirect manifestations of such desires are an act: “He never forgot himself, as I say; and so he never forgot to be graceful and tender, to wear the appearance...of stirred senses and deep intentions” (*PL* 2:79). It is not possible for Isabel to respond entirely in kind – she is going to have to decide what to do with that “something within herself, deep down, that she supposed to be inspired and trustful passion” (*PL* 2:18). When Osmond declares his love for her she retreats, just as she did before the declarations of Warburton and Goodwood. Her fear is that she is going to lose a part of herself – the passion “was there like a large sum stored in a bank – which there was a terror in having to begin to spend. If she touched it, it would all come out” (*PL* 2:18). Isabel eventually does allow this passion to be tapped within the relationship with Osmond,

but not in an out-rushing, complete way. Osmond's delicacy, his aesthetic approach, provides a model for her handling of her passion. She can express it, as he expresses his excitement, in "a kind of ecstasy of self control" (*PL* 2:79). What she doesn't yet suspect is that what he is controlling is not an "inspired and trustful passion," but rather "the elation of success" (*PL* 2:78). He is not interested in interacting, even in a mediated way, with some intense passion at the core of her being. His interest, of course in addition to her money, is in her surface and its uses. He accesses her passion only as a means to those ends. The narrator gives us Osmond's interests this way: "What could be a happier gift in a companion than a quick, fanciful mind which saved one repetitions and reflected one's thought on a polished, elegant surface?" (*PL* 2:79). The irony here is that it is Osmond's falsity that enables Isabel's confidence in him as a lover. His self-controlled attitude, the lack of real erotic passion on his part, means that his excitement creates "very little smoke for so brilliant a blaze," and so he can maintain "a constant view of the smitten and dedicated state" (*PL* 2:79). He can watch her carefully and thus respond appropriately to the expression of her desires. Most importantly, he will never, at least within the context of the courtship, show the kind of brute passion Goodwood presents – a kind of passion that demands in correspondence an emptying, an unimpeded flowing out, from Isabel's core of desire. She thinks she has found a way to safely address her passion, but what about those ideals? The narrator has the kindness to address this question directly:

What has become of all her ardours, her aspirations, her theories, her high estimate of her independence and her incipient conviction that she should never marry? These things had been absorbed in a more primitive need – a need the answer to which brushed away numberless questions, yet gratified infinite desires. It simplified the situation at a stroke, it came down from above like the light of the stars, and it

needed no explanation. There was explanation enough in the fact that he was her lover, her own, and that she should be able to be of use to him. She could surrender to him with a kind of humility, she could marry him with a kind of pride; she was not only taking, she was giving. (*PL* 2:82)

Her ideas about independence have been muted, “been absorbed in a more primitive need,” but they have not been quashed or offended. Her need to assert her independence is addressed as she rejects all advice against marrying Osmond; her need for personal expansion is shifted from the geographical and social to the aesthetic realm as she now imagines “a future at a high level of consciousness of the beautiful” (*PL* 2:82). Though these ideals have been addressed, it is important to note that they have not been merely translated into new terms – they have been supplanted by the more original, the more “primitive” motivation which is the need to come to terms with her desire.

This answer to her need has come “down from above like the light of the stars,” and seems to solve all her problems at once, but it is not what she imagined and feared at the beginning of this story. In this case, the light is coming down from the stars while what she had originally imagined was a dawning. Here she has her passion under some control; she has some power of retention – it is not the complete giving. Note the qualifications at the end of the above passage – her giving produces only a “kind of pride,” and she is “surrendering” with only a “kind of humility.” Again, it is the fact that Osmond has no corresponding passion, no erotic desire waiting to tap her own, that allows her to avoid what she fears. Isabel has answers to the social sorts of objections to her marriage. She tells Goodwood that she does not need Osmond to have a known name, to come from anywhere or belong to any social set. As we have learned through her response to Warburton, this lack of position is actually, for her

purposes, an asset. She brushes aside, as well, Mrs. Touchett's similar objections, but she cannot successfully answer Ralph's. Ralph has some of the same objections as the others do, but his primary reason for disliking Osmond is something that he has a little difficulty expressing. Ralph is trying to tell Isabel something about Osmond's lack of erotic desire, his inability to connect passionately, his impotence in this sense. He hesitates and fumbles, "thinking hard how he could best express Gilbert Osmond's sinister attributes without putting himself in the wrong by seeming to describe him coarsely," as he refers to Osmond as "well, small," and calls him a "sterile dilettante" (*PL* 2:70, 71). The exchange hovers between the overt subject – Osmond's taste – and the underlying subject, which is Osmond's lack of passion, his emotional sterility, and the possibility that Isabel will be an object of his taste rather than of his desire. Ralph's attempts at delicacy fail, and the discussion heats up in response to the subtext. It is not until Isabel shifts the conversation away from the threatening erotic, reinterpreting Ralph's word "small" as a reference to Osmond's bank account, that she regains her composure. She is entirely unwilling to undermine her perfect solution by entertaining the possibility that her tentative, limited expression of passion toward her fiancée is directed toward what is in reality an emptiness.

Isabel eventually does come to realize that there is no corresponding fund of passion in her husband; that his appreciation is, and is of, surface and form, and that his concerns are not those of a lover, but those of a controller. The "light of the stars" which had "simplified the situation at a stroke" has gone (*PL* 2:82). She spends a night, sitting before a dying fire, thinking over her relationship with Osmond. This is the scene in which Isabel, like Dorothea Brooke, sums up and internally dramatizes her disillusionment with regard to her marriage. Here in Chapter 42 she reflects, now after a couple of years married, that "it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one; she comes to believe that she has been

led into “the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation,” and that things are again not so simple (*PL* 2:190, 196). Now that her hopes of safely addressing the question of her desire have been extinguished, the question of her personal freedom and the constraints on her development becomes again important.

What are her prospects with regard to her re-emergent need for personal liberty – both at this crucial moment and at the end of the novel? We can begin very practically with her financial and legal situation. Financially, Isabel is really free to do pretty much as she wishes. Elliot M. Schero, in an essay titled “How Rich Was Isabel Archer?” makes it clear that Isabel is in nearly complete control of her fortune. Daniel Touchett, when presented with the idea of leaving her with half of what he had intended for Ralph, is concerned about the possibility that Isabel would fall victim to a fortune hunter, and makes a point of waiting until his solicitor arrives before proceeding. It is obvious that he intends to secure her money. As Schero points out, the normal practice in the 1870’s would have been to secure Isabel’s inheritance by employing two legal devices – the “separate estate,” and “restraint on anticipation” (Scherro 85). The first device makes the woman’s money her own, and the second restrains her from turning any more than the income from the money over to her husband. While she is single, and after a divorce, she has nearly complete control. She is, furthermore, at liberty to divorce Osmond – especially in the light of her eventual discoveries about his past – under the laws of both England (where her money is) and Italy (where she was married). While married, she has access only to the interest as it is earned. Isabel’s financial independence is explicitly confirmed in the text – when Rosier, in his quest for Pansy’s hand, inquires after Osmond’s wealth, Madame Merle tells him, “The money’s his wife’s” (*PL* 2:95). As an intimate of Osmond’s and as one deeply concerned, for Pansy’s sake, with the state of Isabel’s

fortune, she would know all the particulars. Osmond cannot tap the fund to provide a *dot* for Pansy, or for any other reason.

If she is financially and legally her own mistress, how then might she be bound and tortured by her situation? It is clear that at the point of her meditation before the fire in Chapter 42, Isabel sees her house in Rome as a prison. She is sure that “those four walls...were to surround her for the rest of her life” (*PL* 2:196). It is important to be specific, however, about exactly what those walls are made of and whether they are still there for her when the novel is coming to an end. Her prison is not a physical one. She is not locked in nor brutalized in any overt way. In this sense, she “had her liberty” (*PL* 2:196). The walls are made of forms and propriety; she is kept from breaching them by a kind of moral inhibition. She recalls the making of her prison in graphic terms:

There were certain things they must do, a certain posture they must take, certain people they must know and not know. When she saw this rigid system close about her, draped though it was in picturesque tapestries, that sense of darkness and suffocation of which I have spoken took possession of her; she seemed shut up with an odour of mould and decay. She had resisted of course; at first very humorously, ironically, tenderly; then, as the situation grew more serious, eagerly, passionately, pleadingly. She had pleaded the cause of freedom, of doing as they chose, of not caring for the aspect and denomination of their life – the cause of other instincts and longings, of quite another ideal. (*PL* 2:199)

If Isabel would like to break out of her prison in the name of her old ideals, she is bound by a moral condition derived from those same ideals. In order for one to believe that one has the right, indeed the obligation, to do as one chooses, without

reference to outside authority, one must believe that one is worthy of the responsibility. In order to go ahead with an Emersonian ideology, one must think very well of oneself. Isabel, as our narrator has repeatedly noted, thinks very well of herself. She can't bear to think that of herself as acting wrongly. What she fears, in this situation, is that she has lied to Osmond about herself, that she has made a gross error, and that she is obliged to live with the situation. The key to this bondage is that though she fears that she has misrepresented herself to Osmond, she believes that he has been honest about himself:

She knew of no wrong he had done; he was not violent, he was not cruel: she simply believed that he hated her. That was all she accused him of, and the miserable part of it was precisely that it was not a crime, for against a crime she might have found redress. He had discovered that she was so different, that she was not what he had believed she would prove to be. (*PL* 2:190)

She thinks to herself that she “had effaced herself when he first knew her, she had made herself small, pretending there was less of herself than there really was” (*PL* 2:191). Osmond, so far as she knows at this point, has been honest with her about who he is. His fanatical adherence to social forms is not something he has hidden from her. His admission of this goes back to the beginnings of their relationship; directly after he tells her that he loves her, he tells her, “You say you don't know me, but when you do you'll discover what a worship I have for propriety” (*PL* 2:21). This belief that she cannot honestly fulfill her marriage contract with Osmond, that she is in some kind of perpetual moral debt to him, is what keeps her in bondage, keeps her in her cage. She is condemned to perpetually, hopelessly, work to redress the moral imbalance between them. The actual power of this imbalance is most graphically worked out in the struggle over whether or not Isabel should go to England to be with

Ralph as he dies. Osmond reveals himself at his worst in this episode and Isabel knows that he is in the wrong and yet she is unable to act on her judgment:

But she never moved; she couldn't move, strange as it may seem; she still wished to justify herself; he had the power, in an extraordinary degree, of making her feel this need. There was something in her imagination he could always appeal to against her judgment. "You've no reason for such a wish," said Isabel, "and I've every reason for going. I can't tell you how unjust you seem to me. But I think you know. It's your own opposition that's calculated. It's malignant." (*PL* 2:354)

The something in her imagination, to which Osmond is appealing, is her idealism. The function that her idealism, her New England transcendentalism, has taken on within her marriage is that of moral guardian. If on the one hand this ethical manifestation of her idealism serves to judge Osmond as he displays a vulgar side, on the other hand it judges her in her dishonesty and more generally inhibits her from rebelling against him. The narrator goes over her sense of this inhibition as he describes her decision to visit Ralph earlier when he is in Rome:

She had not as yet undertaken to act in direct opposition to his wishes; he was her appointed and inscribed master; she gazed at moments with a sort of incredulous blankness at this fact. It weighed upon her imagination, however; constantly present to her mind were all the traditional decencies and sanctities of marriage. The idea of violating them filled her with shame as well as dread, for on giving herself away she had lost sight of this contingency in the perfect belief that her husband's intentions were as generous as her own. (*PL* 2:245)

Her dread is associated with the general moral violation. Her adherence to such a strict moral code has its roots in the religious side of Transcendentalism. As the narrator lays out her theories in Chapter VI, he writes that “she had an unquenchable desire to think well of herself. She had a theory that it was only under this provision life was worth living; that one should be one of the best” (*PL* 1:68). The idea that one must think well of oneself in order to imagine that one deserves to expand out through and over social constraints has its formalized manifestation in the ethics of Unitarianism. Osmond knows this, though the connection is not entirely clear to Isabel. He has an ambivalent relation to these ethics. When they are employed in a judgment of his ethics or lack of them, he reacts with hatred and scorn, he accuses her of having “no traditions and the moral horizon of a Unitarian minister. Poor Isabel, who had never been able to understand Unitarianism!” (*PL* 2:201, 202). As we have seen, he is also very willing to employ this ethical system to further his control.

Her shame has to do with the deal she has arranged with her desire. In order to appease her desire she has agreed to give up the idea that she will be independently involved in a project of personal expansion. This sacrifice is mitigated by the expectation that she will be participating, within the constraints of marriage, in a joint project of aesthetic and cultural exploration. Once she knows that this project is not, never was, to be, that instead she has been drawn into precisely the kind of social constraints she had been at pains to avoid, she shuts down the flow of her passion. Her shame derives from her sense that she has been tricked through her desire – even though she has no idea as yet to what extent.

That is, of course, until she comes into possession of Gilbert and Serena’s secret. It is the Countess Gemini, Osmond’s sister, who gives Isabel the key to her prison. The countess is not sure that Isabel does not yet know the secret of Pansy’s parentage – that Pansy is not the daughter of Osmond’s dead wife, but of Serena Merle

– but she is sure that the knowledge is a key that Isabel can use. As she says, “Perhaps you do; perhaps you’ve guessed it. But if you have, all I can say is that I understand still less why you shouldn’t do as you like” (*PL* 2:362). What this information does for Isabel is to shift dramatically to her side the weight in the moral balance. Osmond’s willful lie to Isabel greatly outweighs her arguably inadvertent underrepresentation of herself. If she wishes to employ the information so as to redress her moral relation to her husband, then she can begin to effect changes in her relation to the social proprieties as he has constructed them. Furthermore, from the perspective of Osmond, once he knows that Isabel knows, he must regard her as in possession of the equivalent of a doomsday machine. If the occasion of his wife leaving Italy unexpectedly and against his will to visit at the bedside of a dying cousin produces for him agonies of impropriety, what might the general dissemination of this secret do to his over-refined social sensibilities? This information potentially not only can free Isabel from her situation of moral indenture, it can give her tremendous leverage, power, in her struggle with Osmond.

The question is whether this potentiality can be realized. In approaching Isabel’s situation from such a pragmatic perspective, though we are following hints given by the narrator and generalizing the attitude of the preface, we are not accounting for Isabel’s point of view, for her consciousness of, her rendering of, her situation. We are also disregarding the ways in which the narrator is working to intensify and further this picture. It is all well to sum up her situation and to say to ourselves that it’s a good one, that she’s in the driver’s seat, and that we are confident that her course at the end of the novel will lead her into better days. However, if we are to take seriously the narrator of the preface, then we have also to accept his formula in which the subject is not the subject except through the consciousness of the character. We also have to account for how the narrator of the novel not only brings

into play forms which are specifically designed to produce the sense of perpetual entrapment, but manipulates them so as to maximize this effect.

The preface offers two creation accounts – one with a more mystical, a more magical sense, in which a vision appears to the author and must be initially protected from the worldly horde, from the “plotting,” and another with a more natural, perhaps a more evolutionary aura, in which a “germ,” blown in on the winds of experience, takes root and manifests, grows, according to its innate properties inherited from what went before. The difference between the accounts reflects the difference between Isabel’s consciousness of herself and an extended, historical, critical perspective on her. We have noted that Isabel’s drama, in which she confronts the possibility of materialization, is not only worked out through placing “the heaviest weight into...the scale of her relation to herself,” it is also worked out in large part through plotting structures and imagery which are obviously derived from romantic, gothic and sensation fiction (3:xv; *AN* 51). On the one hand, as we have already noted, Isabel comes into the novel through a library and reading room. The playing out of her adventures in these forms is further evidence that her past, the formation of her imagination, is what determines her future. She is the germ and her genetic material, so to speak, is made up of literary and philosophical ideas and forms ready to be materialized in the actions of her life in Europe. This is the point of view that the narrator is advancing when he lets the reader in on Isabel’s history, and when he highlights her bookish approach to English culture in her conversations with the Touchetts. A consciousness of these forms as they work in the novel can have the effect of allying the reader with the ironic and analytic side of the novel’s narrator.

On the other hand, the application of these forms works strongly to produce an identification with Isabel’s perspective. Readers of fiction are conditioned to respond to sets of cues – generously provided by a narrator who can be trusted to know what he is

about when he does so. One might simply leave off here and declare that there is an inherent duality concerning the readability of these novels – that one can read them naively, thrilling and chilling, and eventually despairing, in identification with the embattled heroine, or one can read them intelligently, knowingly, as a treatise on the relation between form and content. What must give pause in this dismissal is the idea that the subject, the actual subject, is not accessible except through the consciousness of the heroine. One cannot, therefore, simply dismiss Isabel's perspective as misguided or limited so as to be useless for other than entertainment. The narrator of the novel, in a very subtle move, has suggested that the scientific approach is not what he intends to elicit when he writes, amid his ironic laying out of her initial psychology, that, "she would be an easy victim of scientific criticism if she were not intended to awaken on the reader's part on impulse more tender and more purely expectant" (*PL* 1:69). The narrator is not here suggesting that one abandon the scientific approach, nor is he even primarily suggesting that one proceed more tenderly and expectantly; what he is inviting the reader to do is to join him in both endeavors – to be double. The subtlety is in the manner. By referring to the reader in the third person, he is suggesting that readers can be removed from that perspective; by suggesting that he hopes that they will be "purely expectant," he suggests that they can be at the same time wholly in sympathy with the character. Through the preface and its presentation of an imagined author who is at once a character and a representation of the very narrator who we find at work in the novel, the narrator of the preface has joined the reader in this doubleness, now become multiplicity. He has suggested that character and author are one – that the perspective of Isabel Archer is also the perspective of her creator. The narrators of both preface and novel are telling us that it is not, then, a case in which either the detached reader as critic is on a higher, smarter level with the narrator or the invested reader as a participant is on a lower, stupider level with the

character. Instead, they suggest that there are two modes at work as one conceives and experiences the relation between vision and embodiment, between ideals and engaged life. Through his re-embodiment in the preface, the narrator is telling us even more than “I was Isabel;” he is telling us that as he reads the novel, “I am Isabel.”

Since one cannot dismiss Isabel’s consciousness, nor even conceive of it as a subordinate, somehow negative example, one must come to an understanding of what becomes of her own view of her situation. We now have some understanding of her view at the novel’s outset, and her view at the moment of her disillusionment. What happens to these ideas, and relatedly, what happens to her consciousness of her situation in the light of the Countess Gemini’s revelation? How does she take it and what might she make of it? At the end of the novel the narrator does not sum up Isabel’s character and ideas the way he did early on. The narrative hand is less visible in this respect as we approach the dénouement. The preface has suggested, through its sanguine attitude toward its own story of placement and materialization, that we might be justified in being optimistic about Isabel’s prospects. Further, nowhere in the preface is there any overt indication that the novel is any sort of tragedy. The novel’s narrator thus appears to hope that the reader will be optimistic. The Isabel of the early chapters similarly hopes “that she might find herself some day in a difficult position, so that she should have the pleasure of being as heroic as the occasion demanded” (*PL* 1:69). Though we have seen Isabel’s early ideas discredited, we can add this one to a larger chorus of voices indicating to the reader that Isabel is going to come out all right. Ralph, in his last few words to her, says, “You’ll grow young again.” and, “I don’t believe that such a generous mistake as yours can hurt you for more than a little” (*PL* 2:416, 417). Henrietta Stackpole, who heretofore has expressed intense objections to Isabel’s returning to Osmond, at the very end of the novel shows no distress or irritation, but instead appears cheerful as she gives Goodwood the news that

Isabel has left for Rome. A majority of voices weighing in on the subject indicate that, whatever she's headed into, it doesn't amount to prison or eternal misery.

These are all, so to speak, opinions, however, and it remains to think about what actually happens to Isabel's sense that she is imprisoned there in Rome. What happens to her feelings of impotence, her ideas about the moral balance between herself and Osmond and her sense that there is no way out? Though one can certainly posit the countess's information as the first clear opportunity for Isabel to see her way out of her dilemma, there are indications that she is contemplating and perhaps even expecting the moment when she is free of Osmond. At the end of the passage in which the narrator explores her feelings of dread and shame as she contemplates seeing Ralph at his hotel in Rome though she knows her husband would not approve, he notes that Isabel "seemed to see, none the less, the rapid approach of the day when she should have to take back something she had solemnly bestown" (*PL* 2:245, 246). From this note one can know several things. First, that whatever it is that must be taken back – whether it is something concretely legal such as her part in the marriage contract, or whether it is something less visible such as a measure of control over her life which had heretofore been ceded to Osmond – is there for her taking. In other words, there is no indication that there will be any effective opposition to it. Though she has some very strong personal objections to this taking back, there is no sense that once these objections are addressed or overcome Osmond will have the power to prevent it. The second is that whatever her objections are – and it is probable that at this point Isabel is not entirely clear on what those objections ultimately will be – she can already, before she has the incentive of Ralph's imminent death, and before she has the power and knowledge of the secret, see herself through to the other side of them. It is thus difficult to imagine that, once possessed of this motivation, this power

and this knowledge, she is going to let herself back into a subordinate, miserable relation to Osmond.

The first clear indication that something has changed is, of course, that immediately upon the countess's departure from the scene in which she reveals the secret, Isabel has "a rapid and decisive conference with her maid," in which they make plans to leave for England that very evening (*PL* 2:374). When she encounters her sister-in-law, she is on her way to her room after having lost, through his access to her ideals, a battle with Osmond. She tells the countess that Ralph is dying, and that Osmond has forbidden her to go. "Nothing is impossible," the countess replies, "Why else are you rich and clever and good?" Isabel responds simply, "Why indeed? I feel stupidly weak" (*PL* 2:360). Though Isabel reacts, in the countess's opinion, rather strangely on hearing the secret – she appears first puzzled, and then shows sympathy for Madame Merle in her plight as a mother who cannot openly love her child – the effect once the scene is over is what the countess initially wished it to be. Isabel confidently acts in defiance of Osmond's prohibition. Stupidity and weakness have been replaced by knowledge and power.

It is worthwhile to note at this point, though it does not apply directly to the question of Isabel's consciousness of her situation, that Osmond does not again appear in the novel. He is referred to, of course, but he is effectively banished from the pages. In this respect, Isabel is done with him. He, too, like Madame Merle, is banished, and one can certainly as a result, write him off as an effective villain.

Isabel's second act, once she receives the information, is to go to see Pansy at the convent. It is in these scenes with Pansy and Madame Merle at the convent that one can perhaps most clearly determine the essential emerging changes in Isabel's consciousness of herself, her relations, and her situation in a more general sense. Her departure for the convent is narrated in the same quick and sure manner as is her

conference with her maid, reinforcing the notion that the information has produced a change in her capacity for sure, independent action, has enhanced her agency. What is also important to note at this point is that these two actions – the visit to Ralph and the one to Pansy – are at bottom compassionate. This emerging compassion, so incongruously, from the countess's perspective, exhibited immediately on the receipt of the secret information, is inseparable from the simultaneous emergence of a new level of consciousness and her enhanced agency. Though Isabel has had from the beginning of the story an interest in compassionate activity, in fact an intention of getting around to it, such activity has remained potential, theoretical:

What should one do with the misery of the world in a scheme of the agreeable for one's self? It must be confessed that this question never held her long. She was too young, too impatient to live, too unacquainted with pain. She always returned to the theory that a young woman whom after all every one thought clever should begin by getting a general impression of life. This impression was necessary to prevent mistakes, and after it should be secured she might make the unfortunate condition of others a subject of special attention. (*PL* 1:72, 73)

Notice that that narrator and the girl have differing ideas about why she doesn't yet concern herself with the "unfortunate condition of others." It is her theory that in order to help others without making mistakes, she needs to expand her view; it is his that she is too young, too impatient and unacquainted with pain. From this perspective, at the point in the novel where she goes to see Pansy, one must, for now, agree more with the narrator's assessment. Her impressions and her personal expansion have not prevented her from making what she now acknowledges as very large mistakes; it is only through years of painful experience, a very painful revelation,

and the prospect of losing Ralph that she begins to actively engage herself in helping others.

This new activity goes hand in hand with a new consciousness, a new way of conceiving herself in relation to those around her. Isabel has had difficulty entering into the minds of others, a failure most evident in her misreading of Osmond and his intentions. The correlative in the preface's account of the creation of the novel, more specifically of the technique employed in the presentation of the heroine, is in how the imagined author decides to put "the heaviest weight into...the scale of her relation to herself" and will "press least hard, in short, on the consciousness of your heroine's satellites, especially the male" (3:xv; *AN* 51). Isabel's situation is not just a matter of plotting, it is, according to the preface's account, born of, and therefore in the image of the very technique which is employed to present it. The correlation extends into the motivations of both imagined author and character for these corresponding approaches. The narrator of the preface clearly lays out a motivation for choosing this mode of presentation:

Now to see deep difficulty braved is at any time, for the really addicted artist, to feel almost even as a pang the beautiful incentive, and to feel it verily in such sort as to wish the danger intensified. The difficulty most worth tackling can only be for him, in these conditions, the greatest the case permits of...I recall perfectly how little, in my now quite established connection, the maximum of ease appealed to me, and how I seemed to get rid of it by an honest transposition of the weight in the two scales. (3:xv; *AN* 50)

He goes on to detail the working out of this approach and his satisfaction with its success. We can know what success is for the narrator of the prefaces. Though he "recalls" his motivation as "the really addicted artist" to be the challenge of

approaching the presentation of his main character through her consciousness, success means reaching a reader – bridging the gap between himself and another, or imagining well enough the interests of another to earn “the reader’s grant of the least possible quantity of attention required for the consciousness of a ‘spell’” (3:xviii; *AN* 54). Now recall a statement I have already noted: “Sometimes she went so far as to wish that she might find herself in a difficult position, so that she should have the pleasure of being as heroic as the occasion demanded” (*PL* 1:69). The implication is again that, in order to mutually apply the conditions of preface and novel, one must understand Isabel’s trajectory as aimed in a positive direction. More specifically, in regard to our current line of thought, the habit of thinking primarily “in relation to herself” is not only what produces her hardship, it can be proposed as a precondition for her “being as heroic as the situation demand[s].” Here one might reassess the judgment of Isabel’s idea that she must “get a general impression of life” before she can effectively reach out to those less fortunate than herself, or for that matter to anyone other than herself. In order to do so, one must reinterpret her idea to mean something more like, “a general impression of experienced life,” in order to shift it into something more like what has actually happened to her between the covers of the novel, in order to suggest that what she has learned has less to do with the wonders she saw in her travels and more to do with what has been impressed upon her through the conscious experience of her own pain. This then becomes an example of how one can harmonize one’s reading of the narrative, ironic, and critical perspectives with the more affective and limited character perspectives.

Though Isabel has figured centrally in Pansy’s fortunes up to this point, she has not been able to act directly on the young girl’s behalf. She has reluctantly served as a confidante to both Pansy and Edward Rosier in their aborted attempts to court; she has, mainly through inaction and indirect action, impeded Lord Warburton’s bid to

marry Pansy; and she comforts Pansy somehow through her mere existence in the girl's life. When Isabel asks, there in the convent, "My dear child, what can I do for you?" Pansy replies, "I don't know, but I'm happier when I think of you" (*PL* 2:385). These acts, however, have been mitigated by, been carried out under, the conditions of her moral subjection to Osmond. They have been carried out along a fine line on the other side of which lay direct opposition to the wishes of her husband. Here now, within hours of receiving the information from her sister-in-law, she is ready to remove Pansy from the convent without so much as consulting with Osmond. Pansy herself has, however, "bowed her pretty head to authority," and decides against such a blatant act of disobedience (*PL* 2:385). What Isabel does is to promise to return to Pansy.

It is easy to construe this promise, this compassionate connection, to Pansy as the leash on which Osmond ultimately pulls. Pansy's return to the convent was conceived by Osmond to serve a dual purpose – to bring both wife and daughter to heel. Isabel has understood that in sequestering Pansy, Osmond is not only "playing theoretic tricks on the delicate organism of his daughter," he is more importantly producing a kind of private theater, "an elaborate mystification, addressed to herself and destined to act on her imagination" (*PL* 2:348). The drama produces results – "he had succeeded; the incident struck a chill into Isabel's heart" (*PL* 2:349). Isabel is not only chilled by the ruthlessness of Osmond toward his daughter; she is chilled because he has used his daughter as a pawn in his game, an unwilling actor in this drama intended to enthrall his wife. She is further chilled, the narrator tells us, because the "old Protestant tradition," which must understand a convent as a prison, "had never faded from Isabel's imagination" (*PL* 2:349). At this point then, the point at which Pansy is sent away, before Isabel knows the secret, "as her thoughts attached themselves to this striking example of her husband's genius...poor little Pansy became

the heroine of a tragedy,” and Isabel is powerless to act (*PL* 2:349). It is natural to assume, then, that Isabel’s promise is generated out of this dramatic spell that Osmond has cast.

Things have, however, changed, and though of course the obvious factor is the information about the past, even at the point where Pansy is first sent off there is a difference in Isabel’s consciousness of what’s going on. This difference in Isabel’s consciousness is what enables her agency and an awareness of this difference is what can enable a reader’s understanding of what she can do. In order to trace the emergence of this difference one must again briefly shift back in time. Isabel’s night of disillusionment before the fire is precipitated by a moment of intuition in turn precipitated by her momentary view of Osmond and Merle together in what appears to her to be an unusual attitude of intimacy. Her as yet unclear idea is that this hitherto unsensed relation between the two of them bears directly on her relation to them. What is important about this intuition on her part is that it is the first significant instance in which her often vaunted faculty of perception translates into real knowledge about others and their relation to herself. A few scenes later, as Osmond is writing and directing the tragedy of Pansy’s incarceration, this faculty is more engaged and at work. Isabel is not only chilled by Osmond’s theater, she is engaged not only in experiencing its effects, but also in *reading* it, in understanding its meaning and purposes. The narrator tells us that “Isabel gave extreme attention to this little sketch; she found it indeed intensely interesting” (*PL* 2:348). He goes on to write that “She could not understand his purpose, no – not wholly; but she understood it better than he supposed or desired” (*PL* 2:348). Here one can again have recourse to the preface in order to better read this development and to help place it in relation to the rest of our thinking.

Osmond's success in enthralling Isabel can be aligned with the prefacer's idea that his minimal notion of success, his idea that a "living wage," is "the reader's grant of the least possible quantity of attention required for consciousness of a 'spell'" (3:xviii; *AN* 54). Through drawing out the similarities and differences between the two dynamics – one the relation in the novel between writer/director Osmond and reader/audience Isabel, and two the relation in the preface between the writer/narrator and the readers – one can resolve one's understanding of what it means for Isabel to return to Pansy, and further the general understanding of the subject. The similarities are pretty much obvious once the comparison is suggested. Pansy's situation, as cold-bloodedly presented by Osmond and read by Isabel in the light of her ideals and background, is to Isabel as Isabel's situation, rather luridly presented by the narrator, Isabel, and others, and read in the context of nineteenth-century novelistic tradition, is to a reader. Both presentations are open to both types of reading as I discussed them earlier. The difference is in the intentions of the presenters. Osmond hopes that his drama will reach Isabel only on the more immediate level. He hopes to only, as the preface's narrator puts it, "cast a spell upon the simpler, the very simplest, forms of attention" (3:xviii; *AN* 54). The narrator of the preface, in contrast, considers a reader's "act of reflexion or discrimination" reward above and beyond what is to be expected (3:xviii; *AN* 54). He goes on to say that this "occasional charming 'tip' is an act of intelligence over and beyond [the 'living wage'], a golden apple, for the writer's lap, straight from the wind-stirred tree" (3:xviii; *AN* 54). Osmond's intention is to exert and maintain control through an activation of Isabel's imagination. The result is to render her "stupidly weak." The acts of "reflexion or discrimination" through contrast, must be productive of knowledge and power.

Though at this point her knowledge is incomplete and her power is not in her hands, she is perceptibly moving along the path to mastery of both. The preface's

narrator wishes to elicit something more complex than does Osmond, and of course the preface is designed primarily with that end in mind. (When he refers to Osmond's performative art as evidence of his genius, one may only guess at the narrator's private estimate of his own achievement.) If the novel was written first and foremost for the "living wage," then the preface is the flourish designed especially to warrant a generous tip. It must be underlined, here, that these two ideas – the idea that this narrator regards the act of reflective reading as generosity on the part of the reader, and the idea that this reflective reading has the effect within the novel of enhancing agency – work in direct opposition to any idea that the prefaces are an act of coercion and limitation. Indeed, the notions of an extra dimension of service, of generosity, of voluntary contribution, are instances denoting the expansion beyond the realm of necessity into a more open, freer space. One would be suspecting this narrator of a very deep and subtle deception if we continued to do so at this point. One would need, in that case, to ask oneself why one continues to suspect, and what could be the motive for such a deception. We do know that the narrator of the prefaces has admittedly set at least one trap, for his own amusement, at both the simpler and more discriminatory reading levels. The narrator of the preface to *The Turn of the Screw* tells us that "this perfectly independent and irresponsible little fiction" is specifically designed to produce a "prompt retort to the sharpest question that may be addressed to it" (12:xiv; AN 169). The difference between the two cases is not only that the narrator admits to setting a trap, but also in the idea that the shorter tale is "perfectly independent and irresponsible." The implication is that other works included in the collection are connected and responsible, that this disconnectedness and irresponsibility are anomalous. The tale is designed, as Shoshana Felman so dramatically puts it, to trap "both types of readers" in a "circle of universal dupery and deception" (Felman 185, 187). In order to perceive the difference, both in the reading dynamics of the two

stories and in their relation to the rest of the collection, one doesn't have to rely on the words of the preface's narrators; one can simply attend to one's experience and the collected experience of reading these texts. While *The Turn of the Screw* has insistently, from the moment of its release, rebuffed interpretation, cycling all investigation back into its own representational economy, *The Portrait of a Lady*, though difficult and routinely misunderstood, readily cooperates in the creation of meanings and connections. In this case, the narrator of the preface is encouraging us to not only participate in a voluntary exchange, he is suggesting a connection between the idea of discrimination and the idea of generosity. In the preface, he defines our discrimination as an act of generosity; in the novel he defines Isabel's interview with Pansy framed by the duel with Serena Merle as the same kind of act. Isabel's interpretive acts, those with which she develops a working understanding of how her social environment operates with respect to her, then mean for us a clear act of discrimination, a further act of generosity by James through Isabel.

Though she has pitied Madame Merle, empathizing with her plight as a mother who cannot reveal herself as such to her own daughter, Isabel must take action with respect to her as a person who has worked and is working against her and against the well-being of others. The scenes with Madame Merle can do two things for a reader's understanding. The first is that Isabel's display of intention and power furthers the sense that Isabel will emerge quite satisfactorily, even powerfully, at the novel's end. The second is related to the first, in that the way Isabel deals with Serena displays in real time the way an enhanced consciousness, a consciousness newly tuned to the consciousnesses of others, can operate. It allows one to peek through that door at the end of the novel, to see what might lie along that "straight path" Isabel so clearly sees as she exits the garden (*PL* 2:436).

Isabel's relation to Madame Merle begins to shift once Isabel realizes that her marriage to Osmond is not what she expected it to be. This shift is aided in an as yet undetermined way when Isabel sees Osmond and Serena alone in a strangely intimate relation, and again when Serena shows an unexpectedly intense and personal interest in Pansy's prospects with regard to Lord Warburton:

More clearly than ever before Isabel heard a cold, mocking voice proceed from she knew not where, in the dim void that surrounded her, and declare that this bright, strong, definite, worldly woman, this incarnation of the practical, the personal, the immediate, was a powerful agent in her destiny. She was nearer to her than Isabel had yet discovered, and her nearness was not the charming accident she had so long supposed, The sense of accident indeed had died within her that day when she happened to be struck with the manner in which the wonderful lady and her own husband sat together in private. (*PL* 2:322, 323)

She has become aware of a plot that exceeds her own plans and conscious awareness: "there had been intention, Isabel said to herself; and she seemed to wake from a long pernicious dream" (*PL* 2:323). In this scene, Serena has returned from Naples and expects to hear that matters have progressed in the plans to marry Pansy to the lord. Surprised by the news that the courtship is off, she betrays her intense disappointment. A very careful exchange then ensues between the two women in which each has things to hide and each betrays both mistrust of and a respect for the power of the other. In the end, Madame Merle bests Isabel. When Isabel asks, "What have you to do with my husband?" and then "What have you to do with me?" Merle responds "Everything!" (*PL* 2:327). At this point Isabel understands, with a murmur of "Oh Misery!" that "Madame Merle had married her" (*PL* 2:327). What she doesn't yet

know is why. Now, however, as Isabel finds Serena at the convent, within hours of learning the whole truth, the duel ends decisively in Isabel's favor. What is most interesting about this duel is not the fact that Isabel holds a superior weapon – the information about Serena's past – but in how she engages her opponent.

In this scene Isabel enters into a new way of imagining another and begins an exercise of her interpersonal power readable in real time – we can watch her consciousness at work in an enhanced way as she interprets and acts with respect to Madame Merle. The episode begins with the unexpected appearance of Merle in the parlour at the convent where Isabel waits to see Pansy:

The effect was strange, for Madame Merle was already so present to her vision that her appearance in the flesh was like suddenly, and rather awfully, seeing a painted picture move. Isabel had been thinking all day of her falsity, her audacity, her ability, her probable suffering; and these dark things seemed to flash with a sudden light as she entered the room. (*PL* 2:375)

The first thing to notice is the function of the term “vision.” Madame Merle does not come into Isabel's field of vision as she enters the parlour. She is “present to her vision” before she appears – presumably since the countess's revelation. Vision, then, is clearly associated with the imagined and the ideal. Isabel's vision of Merle is also figured as “a painted picture,” static and framed. Vision is a substantive, inert in itself; in need of a verb to enter the temporal, the moving dimension. Her vision is distinct from her “seeing,” the latter being connected to temporal, material, immediate reality. The implications of this shift from an ideal to a real perception exceed this scene in more than one way. Initially one can note that this very specific shift is also indicative of the more general shift in Isabel's understanding of Madame Merle and of how the older woman stands in relation to the younger. Isabel's consciousness of

these things has moved from one which is out of synch with reality to one which has such surety with respect to the facts that it is figured in terms of legal evidence. The countess's allegations are affirmed for Isabel by the mere presence of Serena, who takes on the quality of evidence. This is not, of course, entirely logical – the mere presence of Merle at the convent does not actually prove anything concerning the countess's story, and it is not as if the actual existence of the woman is in question. What this effect does is to underline the point that Isabel is conscious of others in a new way – in a way that works within a temporal and material reality and that is not out of line with her imagination. The effect is dramatic – “dark things seemed to flash with a sudden light” – as Isabel's consciousness arrives at this intersection of the imagined and the real, of the ideal and the material, of the eternal and the temporal. This sense, of being at a perhaps incongruous and uncomfortable conjunction of two realms, is underwritten by the description of the parlour itself. Here in a convent, removed from the mundane, deep within the heart of the Eternal City, she finds herself among “new-looking furniture” and “a large clean stove of white porcelain.” She has “thought it less like Rome than Philadelphia,” which not only suggests modernity, moving time, but also reintroduces the other new note, of compassion, as Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love (*PL* 2:375). Here is a set of figures and facts which indicate that Isabel has achieved some new relation with reality, developed some new way of conceiving her relation to others. This conception of her relation to others yields an enhancement of her agency and her power. In this case she for the first time clearly wins in an exchange with Merle. She not only wins, she effectively banishes the other woman to America. Their final words to each other not only mark Isabel's compassion, they also establish her ascendancy:

Madame Merle dropped her eyes; she stood there in a kind of proud penance. “You're very unhappy, I know. But I'm more so.”

“Yes; I can believe that. I think I should like never to see you again.”

Madame Merle raised her eyes. “I shall go to America,” she quietly remarked while Isabel passed out. (*PL* 2:389)

This fact, that Isabel has banished Serena from Europe, is reiterated when Mrs. Touchett asks Isabel about it:

“Do you still like Serena Merle?” she went on.

“Not as I once did. But it doesn’t matter, for she’s going to America.”

“To America? She must have done something very bad.”

“Yes – very bad.”

“May I ask what it is?”

“She made a convenience of me.” (*PL* 2:410)

It is not only clear that Isabel has reached a new level of personal power through a new consciousness of her relation to others, but that she is conscious as well of this change.

So, with respect to the subject of all this representing and re-representing as the preface gives it one can come to some conclusions. There has been some accounting of the subject in its simplest sense – that of its being a representation of a young girl affronting her destiny. One can understand Isabel as an idealistic young woman who is unwilling to accept the fact that she has a history and a material reality which includes others, who suffers as a result, and who in the end comes to some terms with the reality she initially rejects. At this level, the story most clearly inhabits a literary world which includes not only sensational potboilers, but the more elevated tradition of Austen and Eliot. The end Isabel comes to is generally understood to be on the whole a bad one, the result of an overly-idealistic, individualistic and inflexible philosophy and temperament which have deafened her to good advice and led her into

an unfortunate marriage. Though a sober-minded reading of the story on this level can produce some evidence which strengthens Isabel's position with respect to Osmond, in the end she's still stuck with him in grim marital deadlock. The moral of this tale might be that young women, no matter how remarkable, ought to be more sensible.

We've also moved through this story in an arc which takes in Isabel's consciousness with respect to her situation. In this pass we can begin to understand how Isabel's mind has resisted experience and how her own figuring of her self, her world, and her experience changes as a result of overwhelming evidence from external reality. Through a close accounting of her behavior and of the narrative cues which suggest a new psychology and a new figuration of reality, in addition to a reading of the preface which aligns its account of the creation of the novel with the action of the novel itself, one can arrive at a more optimistic view concerning her prospects at the end of the novel. She shows sign of real power, maturity, and determination. Within this context, Osmond's power fades perceptibly, and with the disappearance of the figure of a helpless feminine victim, the prospect of re-figuration can extend even to his own figuration as a sort of gothic villain. This arc, however, is not complete, because no matter how conclusively one may argue for optimism with respect to what may happen to Isabel Archer, it ends there, in optimism, because one really has no way of knowing. The story cannot be finished at this level.

This manner of successively arcing, looping, through the text is, of course, suggested and aided by a reading of the preface, and one can return to the preface to read again in a manner, along yet another arc, which addresses this incompleteness, and which also addresses what is arguably the primary purpose of the preface itself. One of the essential vehicles for moving along these arcs has been an understanding of the preface's account of the creation of the novel as homologous with Isabel's story. This line of thought suggests that the incompleteness we find in the latter somehow

applies to the former. In this case we would be using “the ground gained” by reaching the end of the novel in order to launch yet another arc through the preface and then again the novel (3:vii; *AN* 42). The last line of thought suggests the idea that Isabel has transformed her consciousness such that it now includes both the ability to imagine and idealize herself and her world, and the ability to apply and correct the imagined and ideal within the material and temporal realm. Such abilities require and produce an acknowledgement of and a respect for the existence and power of others. What it has not given us is a full representation of the application of these abilities – we do not see them entirely engaged nor do we see them engage her entire situation.

If the creation account in the preface and the story are homologous in this sense, then there must be something which corresponds to the premature ending of the plot. Isabel does not apply her new consciousness, what, correspondingly, does not happen in the preface’s creation story? One can be sure, at any rate, that a Jamesian narrator will not be giving a direct answer. In order to arrive at one we must revisit the goals as laid out in the preface.

The imagined author begins with his vision, his germ, and then encounters his “primary question,” which is “Well, what will she *do*?” (3:xvii; *AN* 53). Once one has read through the novel, the most intelligent response to this simple question is “not much!” Isabel makes her way through the plot mostly by deferring action and by being acted upon. Indeed, when the imagined author seeks the answer to this question, he seeks it not from Isabel herself but from the set of her “complications,” embodied in the other characters, who are further figured as “the numbered pieces of my puzzle, the concrete terms of my ‘plot’” (3:xvii; *AN* 53). The imagined author joins in with this group of “doers” when he speaks of “really ‘doing her’” (3:xvi; *AN* 52). Simply getting up some action is not, however, the entire goal of this author. When he speaks of “really ‘doing her’” he means doing her from inside her consciousness. The

question “what will she do?” breaks out into “what will she consciously do?” and “what will her consciousness do?” Here, of course, one has retraced the two arcs described above, but through the account in the preface; and now one can describe the manner in which the creation account is also incomplete. If the primary goal is to set his vision, his subject, into action, and to present that subject and that action through the consciousness of the subject itself, then there has been a failure of application. Isabel is mostly presented as a static object through the eyes of others.

In order to understand just how this is so, it is helpful to refer to Sharon Cameron’s distinction between “psychology” and “consciousness” detailed in her elegantly titled *Thinking in Henry James*. Cameron argues that the Anglo-American critical tradition with respect to the novel has operated with “the assumption that what is being examined is the representation of a psychology which is an account of consciousness; that a concern with consciousness is a concern with psychology; or in slightly different terms, that consciousness can be explained with reference to a psychology” (Cameron 1). Cameron goes too far when she claims that “James isolates consciousness from realistic considerations of it,” but it will be useful for us to understand our imagined author as beginning to distinguish between psychology and consciousness (Cameron 2). For Cameron, the difference between the two ways of representing interiority not only means that a psychology is totalistic and static, while consciousness is ranging through space and time, subject to mutations in experience, it also means that a psychology attaches firmly to, defines, a specific character or subject, while a Jamesian consciousness ranges free, exceeding the bounds of, and ultimately detaching from, the individual character or subject. The prior distinction is applicable to James’s fiction, while the latter is not. In order for Cameron to make the latter distinction, she must not only read directly against the narrator of the prefaces, which she knowingly and happily does, but she must also ignore the fact that, in

James's fiction, the farther consciousness ranges out beyond narrator or character, the stronger the voice and the demonstrated intentionality of that subject becomes. The distortions and omissions in her readings of *The Golden Bowl* and *The American Scene* reflect this denial of what is an essential dynamic relation between character and consciousness.

I will have more to say on this topic in my discussion of *The Golden Bowl*, but for the present I will make use of the distinction between psychology and consciousness to describe what it is that the imagined author of *The Portrait of a Lady* has not finished. The accounts I have primarily been working with in Chapter VI and Chapter XLII, do not show Isabel's consciousness at work in real time. They employ a mixture of summation, retrospection, indirect discourse, free indirect discourse, and narration to give a picture, a portrait of her mind at that stage in the narrative. They each present a psychology as described above and as distinct from consciousness, and importantly for our present line of thinking, as distinct from what the imagined author has set out to do. Though it would be an oversimplification to state that this is the only mode in which this novel represents interiority, in the main and for most of the novel, the novel's tactic is to set up a representation of Isabel's psychology and then see what events, experiences, do to it. The changes are then recorded in another summation. This mode is applied both on the gross level remarked on above, but also on a finer level within scenes. It is only toward the end of the text, really from Chapter XL, in which Isabel detects something strange in the air between Merle and Osmond, that one can detect the beginnings of a new approach. The change in approach is most evident in the remarkable exchange between Isabel and Serena at the convent. I have noted the singularity of this scene, and noted as well that it marks both a significant alteration of her behavior and of her consciousness of her behavior. What remains to be noted is that this scene also marks an alteration of the narrative

mode of representing her consciousness of her behavior. Here we have the first real flowering of represented consciousness at work in real time.

When held up to comparable scenes in James's later novels, it appears a rather crude rendering, but its typical relation to scenes such as the meeting on the terrace between Maggie and Charlotte on the terrace at Fawns in *The Golden Bowl* is undeniable. Here as in the later case the characters involved exhibit a sort of hypersensitivity to the consciousness, self-consciousness, and other-consciousness of an opponent who is also at least to some degree the object of affection and care. One of the marks of this change in Isabel's and the narrator's manner is through, again, the use of the vision metaphor. This time, however, it makes its point through its absence:

So Madame Merle went on, with much of the brilliancy of a woman who had long been mistress of the art of conversation. But there were phases and gradations in her speech, not one of which was lost upon Isabel's ear, though her eyes were absent from her companion's face. She had not proceeded far before Isabel noted a sudden break in her voice, a lapse in her continuity, which was in itself a complete drama.
(*PL* 2:377, 378)

So vision, which has been associated from the first in the novel with Isabel's idealism, her ideas about herself that kept her from entering the material dimension and the temporal stream, and which from the first, in the preface's creation account, is associated with the subject before it is engaged, takes a back seat to hearing. Not only does hearing someone require more proximity to the other than does seeing them, but one assumes that one is actually accounting for their presence, their subjective existence, if one is listening to them, for it is through the medium of language that we primarily communicate. The fact that Isabel is attending to Serena's speech requires as well that she immerse herself in the temporal stream, for she cannot control the

focalization of her hearing the way that she can control that of her vision. She cannot cast her hearing out in those Emersonian concentric circles as she makes her way through this scene. If she is to succeed, her perception must cycle out to and return from her interlocutor. This shift achieves even more significance when we remind ourselves that we are entirely within the domain of linguistic discourse when we enter the novel's represented world. Here the narrator brings the represented into a clearer harmony with the representation, and the reader into clearer relation to the text. What Isabel is doing with respect to Serena is very much like what the narrator of the preface is encouraging the reader to do with respect to the text, an interpretive cycling as one attends to the line of narration. Both narration and reading occur in time, are laid out and experienced primarily diachronically, though planning and interpretation occur respectively before and after these acts. The narrator of the preface reads through the text, passes through its space, follows its temporal line, and gains ground on the other end. From this standpoint, he reassesses, re-figures, and then returns to the other end, which is, or was, the site of the planning. On reaching this site, this ground at the beginning end, he finds that he must recreate it, re-create a new beginning, imagining, planning, which is, as we have discovered, itself a kind of interpretation. What Isabel is beginning to do is something like what the preface suggests, as she attends to the speech armed with some imaginative constructs – specifically in this case the information about who Serena is to her – which aid her interpretation as she moves along. In this case the returning arc of the cycle is represented by a change in Madame Merle:

This subtle modulation marked a momentous discovery – the discovery of an entirely new attitude on the part of her listener. Madame Merle had guessed in an instant that every thing was at end between them, and in the space of another instant she had guessed the reason why. The

person who stood there was not the same one she had seen hitherto, but was a very different person – a person who knew her secret. This discovery was tremendous, and from the moment she made it the most accomplished of women faltered and lost her courage. But only for that moment. Then the conscious stream of her perfect manner gathered itself again and flowed on as smoothly as might be to the end. But it was only because she had the end in view that she was able to proceed.
(*PL* 2:378)

This cycle, from person to person, from self to other and back again, is enabled by the willingness to enter the material and temporal dimension. How, then might we understand the narrator of the preface as entering the material and temporal dimension in his cycling? In addressing this question we come to grips with the most obvious and perhaps the primary function of a New York Edition preface – the function of relating this novel to the rest of the works in the collection. If the narrator of the preface represents himself as a sort of biographer and editor, then we can move out into that realm and see that the largest arc extends out past the end of *The Golden Bowl*. In this, the largest cycle available to the narrator of the preface, we have the editor of the collection speaking, through multiple imagined authors and narrators and texts, to the imagined author of *The Portrait of a Lady*.

It is only on this arc, along this trajectory, that Isabel's story can be completed. The novel ends before it can produce a full representation of how Isabel will use her newfound skills to deal with Osmond, but Maggie Verver of *The Golden Bowl* shows us what can be done with a similar set of abilities and resources. It is, as well, only in the later fiction that the Jamesian narrator develops adequately the ability to represent consciousness at work between characters and in real time. This idea, now, leaves the door wide open to the kinds of criticism that we began by dismissing, criticisms of the

prefaces as attempts to retroactively impose unity and a teleology on a disparate set of texts. If the primary purpose of the preface is to present *The Portrait of a Lady* as the first move in a trajectory of development that ends in the perfection of *The Golden Bowl*, do these criticisms not apply? In fact, they do not. A trajectory of development does not necessarily imply an endpoint in perfection, nor for that matter, an endpoint. Also, describing a trajectory of development with respect to the representation of consciousness does not eliminate other movements and processes, even contradictory ones, within the Jamesian oeuvre. The essential thing to keep in mind here is the double thrust of narration evident throughout these texts and, arguably, throughout the novel as a form. I've noted this duality as it works to involve the reader in the affective force of the characters' perspectives which speak and otherwise signal from within generic forms, while at the same time encouraging the reader to engage with the narrator in a critical consideration of those voices and those forms. The effect is to allow experience to respectfully inhabit both inside and outside dimensions. The narrators of this preface and of the preface to *The Turn of the Screw*, as we have seen, make specific reference to this duality, this dialogic dynamic. The same duality applies within this larger circle that we are drawing. In this case, there is a clear and strong movement toward and into the Jamesian novel as a center, as a stage, through which all passes, and there is the movement beyond the circle of its represented world, which provides reference and a turning ground on which one can project another pass into and through it. The weaver becomes shuttle and then weaver again. The writer/director becomes actor then writer/director again. This dynamic works in nearly every dimension of these two texts, from the syntactic and figural choices we noted in the sentences of the preface, to the struggle between Isabel's desire and her ideals which then produce a struggle between her personal ideals and her social experience, to this tension between the autonomy, the specificity of, this novel and its relation to,

its meaning within, a group of texts. It has been said, many times, that one of the primary features of all novels – historical, social or psychological – is their involvement in this tension between the specific and the general. Not only do novels function as illuminators of, and mediators in this dynamic, it actually constitutes them; they are made of it. The preface has extended this dynamic to the relation between James's individual novels and the New York Edition collection. It does so primarily through the vehicle of another story, a narrative refiguration of this dynamic which exists in specific relation to both the novel's reality and to a reality which encircles it, a reality which includes representations of an author, other works, other authors, and even of the "house of fiction" which encloses them all (3:x; *AN* 46). This arc reaches out and includes a representation of the narrator himself in all his historical relation to the rest, and it is in this way that he, too, "matters," as Isabel finds that she must.

An understanding of, and an appreciation for this cycle, re-enacted in every dimension of the mature Jamesian text, can facilitate the further understanding of these texts' usefulness, and of how they have been mis-used. If one reads them with a disregard for either pole, either epicenter of the cycling dynamic, then one is apt to be disappointed in James as either a clumsy plotter, or an emotionally-removed aesthete. If, however, one engages, as much as possible, the full dialogue in all its simultaneous duality, then one gets to practice, within the highly detailed field of the Jamesian interpersonal reality, the art of a more fully-conscious, real-time engagement with experience.

The Figure in Space: Conceiving and Representing Relation in *The Golden Bowl*

In his preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, through the coordinated use of two major metaphors, James renegotiates the relations in the novel, his own relations to the novel, the novel's relations to the rest of the works in the New York Edition, and by extension, our relations to all these things. In his preface to *The Golden Bowl* he doesn't need to do this kind of intervention and renegotiation. He tells us "that the march of my present attention coincides sufficiently with the march of my original expression; that the apprehension fits, more concretely stated, without an effort or a struggle, certainly without bewilderment or anguish, into the innumerable places prepared for it" (23:xii; AN 335). This coincidence means that a study of the way key metaphors work in and through *The Golden Bowl* can begin at the center of the representational dynamic; James ushers one directly into the action of the novel, without performing, as he does in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, the kind of alchemical ritual necessary to enter into the "literary monument" and consider productively its "fine embossed vaults and painted arches" (3:xvi; AN 52). It also means that the transformative refiguring, the agency-producing art as performed in the earlier preface, can here be found within the novel itself. In this respect, it is doing its own work. It does its work so well that its preface, rather than figuring further relations and extensions, performs recursive and limiting functions. James's return to the question of the relations between previous prefaces and earlier works, and his declarations about the rights of literary representation in the face of illustration, mark the boundaries of the oeuvre, and serve to channel the authority generated up to this point in the New York Edition out to a discerning reader and away from any competition from the visual arts.

The preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, as I have illustrated, employs metaphors that open the novel to the rest of his oeuvre, building relations between it and other works and narrative dimensions that, so to speak, give it a future. The organic metaphors in the preface both work against and encompass the opposed forces in the novel in order to reorient the action through and out into intertextual and extra-fictional dimensions. The characters themselves, however, are too firmly locked for most of the novel within their philosophical and social paradigms to leverage their situations with figurative tools. In contrast, though Maggie is trapped in her relational matrix for the first half of *The Golden Bowl*, in the second half she generates movement and becomes a conscious agent through the skillful management of a series of powerful figures. She doesn't need the help of the prefacer in order to save herself from the forces that bind her.

The metaphors in *The Golden Bowl* function, as do those in the preface to the earlier novel, not only to reorient and create possibility within the action, but to extend the possibility of movement into other dimensions of the reading dynamic. The simplest way in which the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* works to supplement the agency available in the action itself is by using metaphors to enter it from a temporal distance and from the biographical/historical dimension. The prefacer, who presents himself as a reader and critic of the novel, blazes a trail and advertises the value of following his lead. The metaphors in *The Golden Bowl* are themselves the sites of transit to and from the action of the novel. Maggie's figures, and those of other successful characters, are powerful because they are not entirely hers. The narrator most often locates crucial metaphors in a space bordered by the conscious activities of character, reader and himself. In more practical terms, metaphors are carefully narrated so that they are not entirely attributable to a character or to the narrator. In addition, they are explicitly offered up to the reader as negotiable – the reader is not

only asked to negotiate the ownership of the metaphor, but to weigh its value and its extension. In more than one case the temporal location of the metaphor is rendered as ambiguous, which makes it more available for a reader's judgments. Maggie's application and management of metaphor, her mistakes and her successes, are offered as models for reading in the novel as well as out of it into the realm of extra-literary experience.

In the following pages I will introduce some of the novel's more powerful and intricate metaphors as they apply to Maggie's situation, detailing their effects on her ability to shift her vision, herself, and thus her set of relations. An analysis of these effects will lead to a discussion of how these metaphors work to change experience, of how figurative representation can accomplish what other methods of conceptualization cannot. I will highlight the opposition, between Maggie's figurative, artistic approach to conceptualizing the relations among the four primary characters, and the socio-political, legalistic approach employed by Charlotte Verver. Finally, I will consider the implications of what Maggie and her father announce as their success.

The Golden Bowl is divided into two volumes, a division emphasized in its original printing, and again in the New York Edition, by a separation into two physical volumes. The most common way of distinguishing between the two volumes is presented by James early on in the preface. There he writes that the "Prince, in the first half of the book, virtually sees and knows and makes out," that since he has "a consciousness highly susceptible of registration, he thus makes us see the things that may most interest us reflected in it as in the clean glass held up to so many of the 'short stories' of our long list." "The function of the Princess," he tells us, "matches exactly with his" (23:vii; AN 329). The division thus joins into a long discussion about "point of view" in Jamesian texts, most recently expressed in various arguments about surveillance and authorial power exercised through focalization. My interest

has to do not so much with the effect of focalizing the first half of the text through the Prince and the second half through the Princess – though that shift will bear directly on my interests. Nor does it have to do so very directly with that other, related, subject so often considered in James's late texts, namely the representation of consciousness. My interest lies in the difference between two ways of conceptualizing and managing experience, one dominant in the first volume, the other, dominant in the second. My primary interest lies in exploring the workings and effects of the latter method.

Before I move on to the much more intimate interaction with Maggie and her metaphors, I would like to return, for a moment, to the question of consciousness and intentionality in these texts. As I have noted in the discussion of Isabel Archer's approach to her experience, nowhere that I know of in James's fiction is consciousness presented as operating for its own sake, nor is the presentation of it conducted for its own sake. The minds of these characters are of interest because they are working on the solution to problems. The conceptual frames and techniques they inherit, invent, and occupy either work or don't work, as do the narrative frames which are also inherited, invented and occupied. A colleague recently asked what I was working on, and when I mentioned this project, she said, "Oh, yeah...Psychological Realism." My problem with her response is that, though these texts are arguably realistic, they are not primarily psychological. As I also noted in the preceding chapter, Sharon Cameron, in her book, *Thinking in Henry James*, distinguishes between "psychology" and "consciousness;" she argues that "psychology" refers to a static, centered, and bounded subject, while "consciousness" allows for movement of thinking away from the subjective center. While I take issue with her further argument that Jamesian consciousnesses ultimately dissociate themselves from any constraints of plot or character, that "James seems to be connecting consciousness with power outside of the

realistic contexts that tell stories about it,” the basic distinction she highlights is very important (Cameron 10). Though her idea – that James is unknowingly attempting, in his later work and especially in *The American Scene*, to construct a meta-dialogue, in which consciousness operates outside and subversively on the realistic dimension of the subject – is intriguing, I can’t accept it for two reasons. The first is that it ignores the repeated intentionality in the mental acts of characters and narrators. In James, consciousness never moves out from the characters’ or narrators’ perceptive centers without a purpose – it moves out on an errand. Although the consciousnesses may move out into shared spaces, out into the relational matrices, they return and are monitored from a clearly bounded subjective center. This center has a specific set of desires to which consciousness is in service. Though the acts of consciousness may bring pleasure in themselves, that pleasure is experienced by a subject. The second reason why I object to this idea is that it produces incoherent readings of the texts. Cameron is right when she argues that consciousness becomes transformative when it moves beyond the subjective center, and she is right that at some remove from the center it can perform various “conversions or revisions,” that out in this space the contents of consciousness can be replaced and shifted – but she is wrong in claiming that there is no plot logic behind Maggie’s choice of silence or speech at any given moment in the action, and that this absence of logic proves that it is not Maggie who benefits from these transformations, but consciousness itself (Cameron 18).

Cameron’s basic distinction, however, allows one to posit that Jamesian reflectors are not employed simply for technical narrative reasons – to obscure the narrative omniscience, and thus provide a more realistic presentation of experience – nor as psychological or aesthetic studies, but that the reflections themselves are transformative tools in the hands of agents with very conventional desires and goals. These novels are realistic in the sense that within their action one can track success

and failure in the application of approaches toward experience. One can, as with any Victorian marriage plot or social novel, come to conclusions about what the text is suggesting about the applicability of these approaches. While the Jamesian subject is often modern in that it is situated outside the bounds of Victorian propriety, and increasingly modern as it doubles and redoubles into an epistemological dilemma, it is also clearly in the tradition of Austen, Eliot, and less elevatedly perhaps, Mary Elizabeth Braddon. James's characters seek social status, true love, marriage, and wealth, while avoiding the treachery of those who would deny them these rewards. To consider consciousness in James without at the same time taking into account the focalizers as intentional agents is to lose the ability to read one's findings back into the text. One can't use one's analysis to make sense of the action.

In Maggie's case, the problem is that her husband is having an affair with her best friend – who is also her step-mother. The plot structure, like those of *The American* and *The Portrait of a Lady*, is pure sensation fiction, revolving around a secret threat to love and marriage. Maggie's dilemma, as she becomes aware that she has a problem, is that she must stop the affair and renew her bond with her husband without overtly involving her father or violating social decorum. At the level of overt communication and of representation to society, the unusual foursome has operated in a kind of transcendent harmony. She seeks a change without an outright rupture. In order to effect this bloodless revolution, she must become a skillful agent rather than a passive and graceful participant. The shift, at the beginning of the second volume, into focalization primarily through Maggie, occurs in the same moment as the shift in her goals and methods. Until Maggie clearly senses that something is not right, it has been her method, her "policy," as James puts it – and that term will figure pivotally in an understanding of the difference in methods – to admire, but not disturb in any way, the unusual familial arrangement. She and her father consider themselves lucky to have

both married without sacrificing their filial bond in any way – “the latter’s marriage had been no more measurably paid for than her own” (*GB* 2:5). Maggie and Adam “liked to think they had given their life this unusual extension and this liberal form, which many families, many couples, and still many more pairs of couples, wouldn’t have found workable” (*GB* 2:5, 6). Now that she finds herself “for the first time in her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position,” she must act (*GB* 2:6).⁷

It’s not really surprising, since this is James, that before we are given an external act we are given an internal one, but it is interesting that this internal act has nothing to do with the ethics of the situation, with the proofs of wrongdoing, with the possibility of societal shaming, with an outpouring of anger or grief. The second volume opens with an act of figuration, of art. Though this act, arguably, occurs in Maggie’s mind, it exceeds her mind, and can in fact be argued to occur primarily outside her consciousness. James provides several interrelated referents for the figure. What the figure, in terms of action, refers to isn’t given until pages later, and the connection isn’t obvious even then. The figure itself commands so much attention here in its place of primacy that its specific referents recede to a separate, if not secondary, dimension. Initially, we are told that it refers to a situation – presumably the original, happy, arrangement of the four main characters:

This situation had been occurring for months and months in the very centre of the garden of her life, but it had reared itself there like some strange tall tower of ivory, or perhaps like some wonderful beautiful but outlandish pagoda, a structure plated with hard bright porcelain,

⁷ The “false position” is an important Jamesian concept. As Julie Rivkin writes in her 1996 book, *False Positions: The Representational Logics of Henry James’s Fiction*, it “designates any number of inconsistencies, discrepancies, and incompatibilities in everything from the selection of metaphors to the construction of gender” (Rivkin 4). It most commonly refers to a situation in which a character’s or narrator’s conception is out of alignment with one or more realities. I will be applying Rivkin’s ideas on the dual nature of the Jamesian reflector to an understanding of how metaphor generates agency.

coloured and adorned at the overhanging eaves with silver bells that tinkled ever so charmingly when stirred by chance airs. (*GB* 2:3)

Like the other significant metaphors employed in the novel, the “pagoda in the garden” metaphor includes character and action as well as objects and setting:

She had walked round and round it – that was what she felt; she had carried on her existence in the space left her for circulation, a space that sometimes seemed ample and sometimes narrow: looking up all the while at the fair structure that spread itself so amply and rose so high, but never quite making out as yet where she might have entered had she wished. (*GB* 2:3)

Note that not only is Maggie now acting in the scene, but that she is narrated as perceiving it as it is, as perceiving the metaphor itself. Up to this point one can assume that the metaphor operates only in the space between narrator and reader – that it goes over Maggie’s head, so to speak, but now one must consider the possibility that Maggie is thinking, imagining, the pagoda itself. Through some extremely deft moves the narrator prevents the possibility from solidifying into certainty. It also remains possible that when James writes “that was what she felt,” he refers to her feeling about the real situation rather than the metaphor. The narrative techniques involved in producing this ambiguity are multiple, involving careful word choices such as “felt” rather than “imagined,” and a temporal shift – the metaphor comes before the action it “represents.”⁸ James also prefigures this central metaphor with a very similar one advanced by Adam Verver earlier in the novel. Adam’s metaphor – in which he compares the Prince to a Palladian church – is clearly invented by him, though enhanced in a dimension available only to narrator and reader, and delivered to the

⁸ The temporality of this passage deserves a study all its own. James manages it so that the metaphor conceivably predates and post-dates its correlative real event, so that it serves both as prescience and reflection.

Prince within the novel's action. It thus serves as a kind of homologous evidence working on the side of understanding this metaphor as to some extent Maggie's. These narrative techniques, which multiply and repeat in the service of both possibilities, are reminiscent of the game played in *The Turn of the Screw*. The difference is that *The Turn of the Screw* is, according to James, a "perfectly independent and irresponsible little fiction," its ambiguity working in the service of "cold artistic calculation," designed merely to "catch those not easily caught," while *The Golden Bowl* is neither, also according to James, independent nor irresponsible (12:xiv, xvii; AN 169,172). In this novel, the ambivalent possibilities, while enhancing the autonomy of the metaphor, also enhance its applicability – because it refuses to leave the space between narrator, character and reader, it remains available to all.

Before dealing with the Jamesian metaphor's transmitting and translating functions within the narrative dynamic, it will be useful to lay some groundwork by determining the uses the characters make of metaphors – how they function in the purely intradiegetic dimension. How does Maggie's figuring help her to understand and accomplish her goals? In the case of the pagoda metaphor, due to the temporal ambiguity, there are two possibilities. If the metaphor predates the episode in which Maggie, without actually showing her hand, manipulates the Prince into knowing that something has changed in her consciousness of the situation, then it is likely that the metaphor has produced the possibility of action. Maggie visualizes the situation as outside herself, as a place and an object. Furthermore, since she visualizes herself as both outside and inside herself, she can watch herself looking up at the pagoda, circumambulating it, and considering it – and she can also be *doing* these things, can be benefiting from the experience itself. The benefits of figuring one's situation in this way seem pretty obvious. Previously, she has been immobile within and with

respect to her situation. Now, the pagoda-in-the-garden model allows her to imagine herself as mobile, able to analyze the situation from multiple perspectives, able to focus on its details and their relation to its totality. Understanding the situation as a structure in space gives rise without effort to the possibility of entering, remodeling, and dismantling. Specifically, in this case, it allows Maggie to do one simple thing:

She hadn't wished till now – such was the odd case; and what was doubtless equally odd besides was that though her raised eyes seemed to distinguish places that must serve from within, and especially far aloft, as apertures and outlooks, no door appeared to give access from her convenient garden level. The great decorated surface had remained consistently impenetrable and inscrutable. At present however, to her considering mind, it was as if she had ceased merely to circle and to scan the elevation, ceased so vaguely, so quite helplessly to stare and wonder: she had caught herself distinctly in the act of pausing, then in the act of lingering, and finally in that of stepping unprecedentedly near. (*GB* 2:3, 4)

One of James's prerequisites to attaining conscious agency is the ability to recognize it in others. Remember that the inability, on the part of Isabel Archer, to foresee the plotting of those around her, was due in great part to her inability to understand that "she herself lived in the mind of others" (*PL* 1:322). Here, and in the rest of the passage, the metaphor is helping Maggie to imagine that there are other minds consciously at work in her situation, that there are other agents within her world – and that these agents are concealed and in some way inaccessible to her:

The thing might have been, by the distance at which it kept her, a Mahometan mosque, with which no base heretic could take a liberty; there so hung about it the vision of putting off one's shoes to enter and

even verily of paying with one's life if found there as an interloper. She hadn't certainly arrived at the conception of paying with her life for anything she might do; but it was nevertheless quite as if she had sounded with a tap or two one of the rare porcelain plates. She had knocked in short – though she could have scarce have said whether for admission or for what; she had applied her hand to a cool smooth spot and had waited to see what would happen. Something *had* happened; it was as if a sound, at her touch, after a little, had come back to her from within; a sound sufficiently suggesting that her approach had been noted. (*GB* 2:4)

To sum up, in a very straightforward and pragmatic way, by using this metaphor she can model her situation such that she can imagine herself moving within and around it. It also allows her to clearly perceive the existence of other conscious agents at work in it. In order to understand how the metaphor does this kind of work, how this work contributes to the narrative dynamic and by extension to the larger Jamesian project, it is necessary to examine the relations between the function of metaphor and the function of the Jamesian “reflector.”

I will follow I. A. Richards in calling the two parts of a metaphorical expression the “tenor” and the “vehicle,” because the second term so happily lends itself to the function of metaphor that I will be highlighting (Richards 99).⁹ In Maggie's pagoda metaphor, her four-person familial arrangement is the tenor and the

⁹ In applying Richards's term this way, I am violating the essential rule that he advances as he chooses it. He argues against using metaphors in describing metaphors, and against modifying metaphors with metaphors. He objects to the terms “figure” and “image” on the grounds that they inappropriately guide one into understanding what he calls the “vehicle,” as referring to a “revival of a sense-perception.” What he neglects to note, as he struggles to limit the radical productivity of metaphor, that when he calls the “second” element in the metaphor (James through his placement of this pagoda metaphor brings into question the primacy of the “tenor” in the metaphor's dual structure) a “vehicle,” a patently metaphorical denomination, he delivers it into space and time just as the discarded terms deliver it into the sensory dimension.

pagoda-in-the-garden is the vehicle. As the vehicle is applied to the tenor, there are aspects of the vehicle that readily correspond to the qualities of the tenor and there are those that do not – that are either irrelevant or contradictory, that extend beyond the overlap. If, in applying a vehicle to a tenor, one is merely looking for illumination of previously unavailable qualities, or for selective qualities, in order to, respectively, enhance understanding or to advance an argument, then one will seek to carefully limit and control the extensions. The ways in which tenors and vehicles can correspond and extend are myriad; the limits of those extensions have been the subject of many debates.¹⁰ What is at issue in these debates is the truth value of a specific metaphor or of metaphors in general. Likewise, when metaphors are employed in the service of art, the questions most often asked have to do with proper correspondence and with the possibility of over-extension. The problem here is that epistemological rigor demands some way of knowing how far a metaphor can be extended, and such a rule is impossible to determine. If the vehicle is to be entirely true to the tenor, then it will be identical to it, and therefore be it. If it extends beyond the bounds of the tenor, as it must in order to be a vehicle, then to that extent it is not true. It makes no sense to assume that, because the correspondences are numerous and/or precise, that the extension will prove to be correspondent as well. It is entirely possible for two entities to have three things in common and a fourth thing entirely different.

Increasingly, as he writes into his late period, James puts metaphor to work in a new, radically productive way. When Maggie moves from a simple figuration of the relationship matrix as a pagoda in a garden, on to a dynamic figuration in which a representation of herself interacts inside the scene with the pagoda and its mysterious inhabiting agents, then she not only has created a model – like those of generals or

¹⁰ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson give a fairly manageable description of metaphorical workings in their *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, 1980.

admirals in which they move miniature armies and navies around on a map and thus more clearly understand the possible implications of this or that tactic – but she has also activated for herself her own character, Maggie Verver's Maggie Verver, who will act for her as James's Maggie Verver acts for him, and who will thus also be acting, at one more remove, for James. In order to appreciate how this character's character can affect the workings of metaphor in and through this text, and how the deployment of this kind of metaphor can generate agency, it will be very to consider Julie Rivkin's work in understanding the Jamesian reflector.

Rivkin's deconstructive analysis of the function of the Jamesian reflector distinguishes between two inconsistent terms James uses to express the nature of characters through whom he focalizes a narrative. The two terms are "centers" and "delegates." Rivkin writes that the thing "the 'center' promises – that consciousness can be fully incarnated in a given character who will then constitute a foundation for meaning and truth in the novel – is exactly what the recourse to a 'delegate' renders an impossibility" (Rivkin 3). She cites Derrida's reading of the mythology featuring the Egyptian deity Thoth, who in part functions as a delegate for the sun god Ra, encoding Ra's will into speech:

Derrida calls Thoth the "substitute capable of doubling for the king": presumably he would be equally recognizable if described in James's terms as "a convenient substitute or apologist for the creative power otherwise so veiled and disembodied." In standing in for his father, Thoth has a double and indeed contradictory effect; on the one hand he repeats and therefore extends the father-king; on the other hand he replaces the father-king and thereby opposes him. But at the same time that he supplants and thereby opposes or differs from the father, he

derives his form from the father; this derivation means that in differing from the father, he differs from himself. (Rivkin 4)

In a familiar set of deconstructive moves, Rivkin exaggerates the naiveté of the authorial intention and the reader's subject position, implying that the author is attempting complete control and that the reader expects undifferentiated truth; exaggerates the difference between complementary dynamics, figuring a complex interplay as outright opposition; and then ends in a declaration of impossibility, falsity, and paradox. These amplifications and simplifications, however, in conjunction with the analytical rigor required in a responsible deconstructive reading, will be very useful in this more text-oriented study. Specifically, an understanding of the reflector as operating somewhat independently, perhaps even to some extent on its own behalf, as capable of producing effects unanticipated by the author, will be essential in this reading of how James's narrative technique and his deployment of metaphor work to produce agency.

For Maggie, the effect of deploying a character who is herself within the garden-pagoda is clear and dramatic. Through this act of imagination and representation she is able to surprise herself, to move in a way that even she, locked as she was inside the parameters of a policy, a policed construction of the relational matrix, couldn't imagine from that subjected position. In fact, the internal and external consequences of the simple move figured in the pagoda scene astound her. Her first response, once she has figured and made the move, is to seek refuge from her fully figured understanding and from the impending relational consequences. She actually works, again figuratively, to deny that anything has happened. Note that again James renders hazy the attribution of the figure:

Moving for the first time in her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position, she reflected that she should either not have ceased to be

right – that is to be confident – or have recognised that she was wrong; though she tried to deal with herself for a space only as a silken-coated spaniel who has scrambled out of a pond and who rattles the water out of his ears. Her shake of her head, again and again, as she went, was much of that order, and she had the resource to which save for the rude equivalent of his generalising bark, the spaniel would have been a stranger, of humming to herself hard as a sign that nothing had happened to her. She hadn't, so to speak, fallen in; she had had no accident nor got wet..." (GB 2:6, 7)

She seeks to avoid a consideration of the implications of her newly figured situation through a retreat into immediate strategic moves intended to conceal what is clearly to her under her previous policy and, as we will see, the policies of Charlotte and the Prince, knowledge that is at once illicit and precious. The "birth of a new eagerness became a high pastime in her view precisely by reason of the ingenuity required for keeping the thing out of sight...might I so far multiply my metaphors, I should compare her to the frightened but clinging young mother of an unlawful child" (GB 2:7). James does indeed multiply his metaphors, as Maggie's new knowledge, initially given as a complex metaphor, and her relation to that knowledge are further embodied and extended in the ensuing pages through a profusion of figures. These metaphors express her mixed surprise, excitement and consternation at the implications of her figured action, implications which include dangerous possibilities and a new, powerful agency available to her. In addition to rendering her as the wet "silken-coated spaniel" and "the frightened but clinging young mother," she is figured as "a timid tigress" and as a dancer who has not danced in some time, but who will now "take out of the deep receptacles in which she had laid them away the various ornaments congruous with the greater occasions and of which her store, she liked to think, was none of the smallest"

(*GB* 2:6, 7, 10, 8). Note the language of the last figure, which can be clearly to an extent attributed to the Princess herself. Metaphors and other figures are often themselves figured as ornaments of language, here used by James in great number (as if from a great store) at the crucial, central, moment in his narrative – and by Maggie as well at this turning pointing her life, not only as ornaments but as the tools and weapons of a secret agent.

James has a habit of figuring the feminine spirit or mind as a garden, and of writing female characters who figure their own interiors as gardens. Recall the young Isabel Archer's feeling "that introspection was, after all, an exercise in the open air, and that a visit to the recesses of one's spirit was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses" (*PL* 1:72). In Maggie's pagoda metaphor, the pagoda is situated within "the garden of her life," and later as "in her blooming garden" (*GB* 2:3, 5). Both Isabel's feeling that the products of one's interior are as flowers from a garden and the idea that Maggie's interior life is a blooming garden (reinforced by the image of her new figurations as jewelry to be put on and off as ornament), together suggest that metaphor is useless in a practical or material dimension. One of the objects, however, of this profusion of metaphorical blossoms, is to demonstrate the effects of the personal, interior and representational dimension on the interpersonal, exterior and material dimension. Maggie is not only startled and for a moment incapacitated by the revelatory power of her figured actions, she is startled and given pause by the practical power the figures themselves impart. James relentlessly envelopes figures within figures as he gives us the contents of Maggie's "brooding fancy":

She had put her thought to the proof, and the proof had shown its edge; this was what was before her, that she was no longer playing with blunt and idle tools, with weapons that didn't cut. There passed before her

vision ten times a day the gleam of a bare blade, and at this it was that she most shut her eyes, most knew the impulse to cheat herself with motion and sound. (*GB* 2:9, 10)

The transformation of art into experience, the pygmalianic move is, of course, at the heart of James's project. In these few pages of the second volume, he suggests in various ways that such a transformation is possible and models several dynamics of transformation.

One of the primary ways in which he indicates that the border between representation and real experience is crossable is by suggesting that representation and reality can be exchanged. It is not so much that the conditions in the represented have moved over into the real, but rather that representation has some transcendental reality. James perhaps most explicitly addresses this premise in the short story "The Real Thing" in which a gentle couple, who are very down on their luck, as a last resort apply to an illustrator on the assumption that, because they are the "real thing," they will be ideal as models for illustrations of gentlefolk. The dialectical stability is troubled because the couple, though they try, are dismal models, while the illustrator's usual models, who belong to a very low class, succeed as representations of nobility and even royalty. The story goes on to suggest that the couple aren't really real, that their country-house gentility is in itself a pose. When the illustrator, to save his deteriorating work, fires them as models, they voluntarily take up the duties of servants, going as far as to bring tea to those models who they previously disdained. In the end they are fired as servants, unfit for even that. The passage quoted above models the possibility for exchange when it suggests that Maggie is escaping the reality of a figure – that is representing the implications and effects of a figure – by having recourse to immediate sensory experience. She seeks to limit her understanding of her actions to the actions themselves, in order to avoid confronting

the magnitude of what is figured and implied. The external, real act associated with approaching and touching the pagoda is Maggie's waiting for her husband, on his return with Charlotte from what is certainly an adulterous episode in the country, in the house Maggie shares with him rather than in the house Charlotte shares with her father. This move constitutes enough of a shift in the carefully managed relational matrix to sound it, to see how the matrix responds. As James so effusively makes clear, the effects of such a small action have surprising and far-reaching implications, but Maggie, for a time, wishes those figuratively extended implications away:

She had merely driven on a certain Wednesday to Portland Place instead of remaining in Eaton Square, and – she privately repeated it again and again – there had appeared beforehand no reason why she should have seen the mantle of history flung by a single sharp sweep over so commonplace a deed. (*GB* 2:10)

Note how Maggie fails in her attempt to secure her action from figuration and implication. In the very act of claiming that it is only an instance, a “mere” event, she claims for it, with a metaphor involving clothing, the title of “history,” holding only that she had no way of knowing beforehand what it would mean.

The question of causality is important in a consideration of how this extension through focalizer and figure generates change in the dimension of real experience. Maggie's attempt to render harmless her action by stripping it of figuration and implication exhibits the tension between understanding figuration as actually generative or as merely descriptive. While she is claiming that she had no way of knowing the implication of her action, she is already through another metaphor augmenting and transforming its future into the historical dimension. Some of her anxiety with respect to the power she has discovered is due to the fact that it is new to her. Later in the story she finds herself consciously using history to refigure and

refashion the conditions of her relationships. Some of her anxiety can be traced to James, through his own manipulation of the temporality and the boundary between narrator and character. These metaphors are so productive because they are to some extent independent of any particular narrative element. In order to understand the pagoda metaphor as in some way productive of Maggie's new conditions, James has introduced it, along with a host of supporting figures, before he narrates the event that correlates with touching the pagoda within the metaphor. Its temporal ambiguity allows it to operate generatively as well as descriptively within the action of the story. In order to enhance the figurative power of the metaphors themselves, the attribution of the metaphors hovers between the narrator and Maggie. This allows some of the narrator's abilities to move over into Maggie's sphere of intention. This loosening of the ties that bind the metaphors to the narrator, characters, and specific points in time, augments the already unpredictable productivity of the figures in this text.

The reason why the simultaneous application of representative and metaphor is so radically productive of agency, is that the deployment of a representative, the application of a metaphor, and the dynamic of agency all share the same structure. The metaphor's vehicle is to the tenor as the reflector is to the author as the agent is to control. Rivkin has pointed out how the Jamesian reflector operates both in the service of the author and in its own service, in its own right. The vehicle within a metaphorical relation also operates both in the service of the tenor and in its own service. When I refer to my daughter as the apple of my eye, I not only inform and enrich the idea of my relationship to my daughter, but I also draw attention away from that relationship and on to eyes and apples and then quite possibly into a consideration of the aptness of the metaphor itself. The extension and placement of one's self through a reflector who might do other than what one already has in mind, into a metaphorical situation whose nature, conditions and direction can vary from that of

those of the tenor, will generate movement and change. The possibility of a transference of the conditions created within the vehicle, the possibility of realization through metaphor, means that the freedom generated within it can be exported out backwards along the chain of representation. The fact that representation through a reflector and representation through metaphor produce the same mix of intentionality and unpredictability present in the condition of agency aids in this act of realization, as one can map the situation of the reflector onto the situation of author.

Consider the nature of agency. It is important in reading James and in this text particularly to draw a distinction between the idea of agency and the idea of power. The reason why I use the term agency to describe the product of artistic representation is that it is bi-valent in the same way. I set it up as distinct, and as I will show later, opposed to a more univalent idea of political, legal and philosophical power. Agency is ambivalent, because it moves between denoting individual power and service to another. In popular parlance this ambivalence can be illustrated by the terms, “free agent” and “agent of a foreign power.” The three ambivalences – between the aims of author and reflector, tenor and vehicle, control and agent – organized into various chains, clusters, and nested structures all produce variance and possibility in this novel’s representation of the uses of representation. As I will detail later, it is the dynamic of agency which allows the reader to enter into, and then carry things out of, this representational dynamic.

As these ambivalent dynamics are deployed, they produce not only possibility and change, but also surprises and uncertain results. The idea of the creative work going off in unexpected directions, or of characters seeming to direct their own destinies, is commonplace enough, because representation inherently produces the ambivalent dynamic, but in James’s fiction, where representation becomes the subject, and where authority is intentionally extended into the representation, the risk of the

unexpected increases geometrically. Rivkin notes “laments in the prefaces that yet another novel has strayed from its design, the bemused or pained recognitions of so many of James’s characters that they cannot act in accord with their own principles, the existence of a social position that necessitates the very behavior it forbids,” and characterizes these “symptoms” as “instances of ‘false positions’” (Rivkin 4,5). These effects of uncertainty are not, however, best understood as false positions, but rather as the natural result of representational risk-taking. A false position is precisely the result of an attempt to avoid risk through policy-making and policing.

When James writes that Maggie is “for the first time in her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position,” he is referring to her growing realization of the impossibility of her situation (*GB* 2:6). The impossibility has been instituted by her attempt to hold everything still, to transcend normal conditions, to keep her modern little Camelot. Her subsequent representations and movements, however risky, however uncertain, and however improper, generate a dynamic in which truth and falsehood interact into the future along an open-ended timeline. Rivkin’s analysis understands such tensions as impossibilities because deconstructive analyses fail in the diachronic dimension, the synchronic, dead slice of the dynamic displays frozen, unbalanced opposition. Such an analysis will fail to account for, and to learn from, a representational system that only makes sense as it moves, intra- and extradiegetically, through time. Remember that Maggie is amazed and initially derailed by the historical implications of her act. The attempt to forestall change, to maintain a perfect balance, to transcend surrounding conditions, is an ahistorical move.

As Maggie initiates this shift, in her methodology, her approach, and her understanding of her interpersonal reality, she has no idea of what the result will be. She immediately sees the risk – of losing her loving relation with husband and/or with her father – but she can’t imagine the path between her present location and a place

where she will find herself secure from Charlotte and the Prince's adulterous relation. She likewise cannot with any certainty evaluate her present position with respect to her previous policy, as "she reflected that she should either not have ceased to be right – that is to be confident – or have recognised that she was wrong" (*GB* 2:6). When she loosens herself from her policy, she loses her ethical certainty. What is perhaps most interesting in this temporalized set of uncertainties, is that Maggie can't with any firmness nail down the valence of her own intentions as she moves beyond her earlier position:

It must be added, however, that she would have been at a loss to determine – and certainly at first – to which order, that of self-control or that of large expression, the step she had taken the afternoon of her husband's return from Matcham with his companion properly belonged. (*GB* 2:9)

It is not, however, that Maggie is acting without specific purposes, that she is acting unintentionally. James tells us that her "small variations and mild manoeuvres...went accompanied...with an infinite sense of intention" (*GB* 2:9). Though intentional action characterizes agency, agency cannot guarantee certainty, indeed cannot even seek it, because risk is intrinsic to the possibility for change. As Maggie's inability to "determine" attests, even the past is subject to change. As one manages, in this representationally-driven methodology, one's situation, meaning, direction and further action are continually redetermined in a historical mode. Maggie understands herself as a historical figure as she casts her view backward, looks around at her immediate situations, and strategizes forward. It is useful to recall here the journey of the prefacer of *The Portrait of a Lady*, who looks back at the creative process, attempting "to recover here, for recognition, the germ of my idea," seeking "these fine possibilities of recovering, from some good standpoint on the ground gained, the

intimate history of the business” – and to contrast again his duties with those of this novel’s prefacer whose conscious movements coincide with those in the novel (3:vii; *AN* 42). One of the primary functions of the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* is to bring it into history, most specifically into the history of the Jamesian oeuvre, but also into literary history and into the historical mode. Isabel Archer, like Christopher Newman before her, is at odds with history – a history James figures for each of them as Catholic, associated both with artistic possibility and confinement in a convent. Before they are married, the Prince tells Maggie, “The happiest reigns, we are taught, you know, are the reigns without any history” (*GB* 1:9) Her colorful response reveals her attitude toward history:

Oh, I’m not afraid of history!...It wasn’t – as I should suppose you must have seen – what you call your unknown quantity, your particular self. It was the generations behind you, the follies and crimes, the plunder and the waste – the wicked Pope, the monster most of all, whom so many of the volumes in your family library are about. (*GB* 1:9)

Maggie, through her figurations, brings herself into the historical mode. In that mode, the Prince’s past and her past are open to refiguration. Of course, this is another refinement of the Jamesian focalizing methodology, as he has his characters doing work for him that he previously has had to do from a more obviously authorial position.

James further underscores and embodies Maggie’s historically and representationally driven agency by giving her methodology a sort of family history of its own. Remember that Adam Verver is himself an active user of the architectural metaphor. Maggie’s pagoda is preceded by Adam’s Palladian church. Adam uses this metaphor to describe, and to communicate information about, his sense of the shift in the family caused by Maggie’s marriage to the Prince:

At first, certainly, their decent little old-time union, Maggie's and his own, had resembled a good deal some pleasant public square, in the heart of an old city, into which a great Palladian church, say – something with a grand architectural front – had suddenly been dropped; so that the rest of the place, the space in front, the way round, outside, to the east end, the margin of street and passage, the quantity of overarching heaven, had been temporarily compromised. (*GB* 1:135)

The narrator goes on to tell us that the compromise was indeed temporary, that the situation resolved, though “no visibility of transition showed, no violence of accommodation, in retrospect, emerged” (*GB* 1:135). He writes:

The Palladian church was always there, but the piazza took care of itself. The sun stared down in his fullness, the air circulated, and the public not less; the limit stood off, the way round was easy, the east end was as fine, in its fashion, as the west, and there were also side doors of entrance between the two – large, monumental, ornamental in *their* style – as for all proper great churches. By some such process in fine had the Prince, for his father-in-law, while remaining solidly a feature, ceased to be at all ominously a block. (*GB* 1:135, 136)

At this point the metaphor has not been attributed to Adam, and it does for a space of a couple pages seem that the narrator is going to keep, as he does with later metaphors, the possibility of attribution as just that, a possibility, but ultimately he does tell us that the actual metaphor is Adam's. Adam “pointed it frankly one day to the personage in question, mentioned to the Prince the particular justice he did him, was even explicit as to the danger that in their remarkable relation they had thus escaped” (*GB* 1:137). The metaphor evolves into a multidimensional, partially paradoxical, geometric model that centers around tactile experience:

It figured for him clearly as a final idea, a conception of the last vividness. He might have been signifying by it the sharp corners and hard edges, all the stony pointedness, the grand right geometry of his spreading Palladian church. Just so he was insensible to no feature of the felicity of a contact that, beguilingly, almost confoundingly, was a contact but with practically yielding lines and curved surfaces. (*GB* 1:137)

The figure is nearly brought right into the action as Adam tells the Prince about his idea:

“You’re round, my boy,” he had said – “you’re *all*, you’re variously and inexhaustibly round, when you might, by all the chances, have been abominably square. I’m not sure, for that matter,” he had added, “that you’re *not* square in the general mass – whether abominably or not. The abomination isn’t a question, for you’re inveterately round – that’s what I mean – in the detail. It’s the sort of thing in you that one feels – or at least I do – with one’s hand. Say you had been formed all over in a lot of little pyramidal lozenges like that wonderful side of the Ducal Palace in Venice – so lovely in a building, but so damnable, for rubbing against, in a man, and especially in a near relation. (*GB* 1:137, 138)

The fact that Adam’s metaphor is attributable to him, performs its functions intradiegetically, and is firmly tied in to a timeline, means that it can perform certain functions that the pagoda metaphor can’t, but also that it can’t reach out across narrative dimensions to perform some of the transformative and transportive functions that Maggie’s figure can. The vehicle of Adam’s metaphor has a more restricted agency – its mission occurs within a more defined area – and thus its connection

within that area can be more developed. The metaphor is released from much of the obligation to be ambiguous and can, in this case, be marvelously apt.

Adam is very specific in naming the kind of church that serves to represent the Prince in his new relation to the Ververs. Palladian architecture is derived from the work and from the theories of Andrea Palladio, a Venetian architect who worked in the sixteenth century. Choosing the Palladian style produces a remarkable set of connections between the Prince's history and Adam's interests. The Prince, Amerigo, is named for his ancestor, Amerigo Vespucci, who we all know as the explorer for whom the American continent is named. The famous Vespucci is a contemporary of Andrea Palladio. These two historical figures serve to extend the Prince through even deeper historical roots, both ecclesiastical and political. The historical Vespucci worked for Lorenzo Medici, the father of Maggie's "wicked Pope," Leo X (*GB* 1:10). Andrea Palladio's style was classical, with facades often derived from those of Roman temples. It was, in its classicism, a historical, backward-looking style even at its inception. The reference to this style clarifies the Prince's specific historicity – as a prince, as a descendant of the Florentine Renaissance, as a representative of old Catholicism, and as an envoy to the new world.

Palladianism has been an enduring architectural style, and in its legacy it serves to illuminate Adam Verver's interests and purposes. Adam is a retired multimillionaire, perhaps a billionaire.¹¹ Like Christopher Newman of *The American*, he has left a remarkably successful life as an investor and businessman, and gone to the old world in search of beauty. For Newman this means that he is looking to buy a wife. In Verver's case it means that he is collecting old world culture in material

¹¹ Adam's worth is never explicitly stated. At one point, the Prince considers the uses of "Mr Verver's millions," and later, as he considers his own value, he wonders "Who but a billionaire could say what was fair exchange for a billion?" (*GB* 15, 21). At the time of *The Golden Bowl*'s publication there were as yet no billionaires. The first was John D. Rockefeller, twelve years later.

form. He is not just collecting art in any narrow sense of the word; he is collecting any transportable manifestation of old world cultural beauty. The Prince himself is one of these manifestations. In accordance with the dynamic of delegation, figuration, and agency, Adam does not himself seek a spouse – he delegates that activity to his daughter. Maggie tells the Prince in no uncertain terms that he is “a part of the collection...one of the things that can only be got over here...a *morceau de musée*” (GB 1:12). Adam’s acquisition of the Prince through and for his daughter is primarily that, an acquisition of art, rather than a familial act. James tells us what was important to Adam in choosing Amerigo as a son-in-law: “Over and above the signal fact of the impression made in Maggie herself, the aspirant to his daughter’s hand showed somehow the great marks and signs, stood before him with the highest authenticities, he had learned to look for in pieces of the highest order” (GB 1:140).

Furthermore, Adam’s reasons for collecting old world culture are not primarily personal and private. Though he is passionate about collecting, “apart from the natural affections he had acquainted himself with no greater joy of the intimately personal type than the joy of his originally coming to feel, and all so unexpectedly, that he had in him the spirit of the connoisseur,” he sees his collecting in historical and public terms (GB 1:140). He has “been struck with Keats’s sonnet about stout Cortez in the presence of the Pacific” (GB 1:141). James writes that Adam’s “‘peak in Darien’ was the sudden hour that had transformed his life, the hour of his perceiving with a mute inward gasp akin to the low moan of apprehensive passion that a world was left for him to conquer and that he might conquer it if he tried” (GB 1:141). It is his intention to “rifle the Golden Isles,” to take the spoils to American City, and to house them there in a museum built for the purpose (GB 1:141). He understands his project as monumental:

It hadn't merely, his plan, all the sanctions of civilisation; it was positively civilisation condensed, concrete, consummate, set down by his hands as a house on a rock – a house from whose open doors and windows, open to grateful, to thirsty millions, the higher, the highest knowledge would shine out to bless the land. (*GB* 1:145)

He intends to release the American people “from the bondage of ugliness” with a “museum of museums, a palace of art which was to show for compact as a Greek temple was compact, a receptacle of treasures sifted to positive sanctity” (*GB* 1:145).¹² Adam, then, falls into a line of Americans who wish to educate and imbue their culture with what is of value in classical culture. His project, while more squarely aesthetic, rather than generally cultural, is of a kind with Thomas Jefferson's. Jefferson's choice of architecture, at Monticello and at the University of Virginia, was Palladian. The original White House was Palladian. Late 19th Century neo-Classical architecture is generally referred to as just that, because its influences reach back beyond Palladio and the renaissance to engage actual Greek and Roman forms, but Palladianism is especially apt because in its historical application it enacts the kind of representational, supplementary, dynamic chain that we have noted in the structures of the Jamesian reflector, metaphor and agency. Monticello engages not only Greek architecture, but each link in a whole chain of re-representation involving, in order of derivation, English Georgian and Irish Palladianism, the work of Palladio himself, Roman architecture, and the “original” Greek. Its purpose is ever refreshed as informing and empowering the new with the old. The choice of the Palladian style thus invigorates and organizes both the Prince's history and Adam's future.

¹² It would be difficult to avoid comparisons between Adam's final project and the late James's as it emerges in the prefaces to the New York Edition. The over-the-top idealism ascribed by the narrator to Adam's conception then appears as gentle self satire – perhaps a caricature of the Jamesian “house of fiction” (*AN* 46).

The young Isabel Archer's difficulty with temporally grounded, historical understandings of her experience, a difficulty expressed and enacted through her Emersonian philosophy, derived extradiegetically from a young author's ideas about artistic vision, and then resolved by the prefacer through an organic growth metaphor, is also represented and accounted for by a lack in her own family history. Isabel, like Maggie, has also lost her mother at a young age. Maggie, however, unlike Isabel, still has a father. And while the core of her problem derives in large part from her desire to maintain an overly intimate relation to her father, he provides a history and certain specific kinds of precedents necessary for the enactment of her agency.

It is important to remember, with respect to both *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl*, that the whole dynamic begins in the economic dimension. Isabel's situation and subsequent adventures are explicitly and directly the result of the lack and then the overabundance of money. Everything Maggie does is dependent on her father's money. There is no obfuscation nor even soft-pedaling of the economic sources of experience in either text. When Maggie's history is opened for refiguration, it extends back into the time when Adam was "forging and sweating," was "polishing and piling up his arms" (*GB* 1:144). Adam's economic pursuits, his investing, are represented as a "warm rich earth" in which the seed of his more aesthetically satisfying career is hidden (*GB* 1:144). Until he awakens to the thrill of connoisseurship, Adam "had stood unknowing, he had walked and worked where it was buried, and the fact itself, the fact of his fortune, would have been a barren fact enough if the first sharp tender shoot had never struggled into day" (*GB* 1:144). The figuration of his business history thus engages the perennial Jamesian "germ" metaphor, where the germ is the undeveloped subject and the ground is the mind of the artist. There is some tension, in this account of Adam's past, between a clearly distasteful attitude toward the actions involved in making his fortune, and an

appreciation of the fitness of his business activities as precursor to his aesthetic activities. On the one hand, his life in business is described as “years of darkness,” which “had been needed to render possible the years of light” (*GB* 1:144). Investing itself is rendered as “the creation of ‘interests’ that were the extinction of other interests, the livid vulgarity even of getting in, or getting out, first” (*GB* 1:144). Vulgarity is a rather strong invective in the Jamesian world. And yet, this life of business, or more precisely the movements and methods which Adam had to perfect and employ in the creation of millions, are given also as shadowy types, as of a primitive kind with the movements and methods he employs as a connoisseur, which can be translated into the movements and methods of the adept artist, the producer of figures that Maggie ultimately becomes.

For Maggie to engage with the historical dimension, to open past, present and future to the transfiguring abilities of representation, she must, and her methodology must, have a genealogy, a history, of their own. In order to represent Maggie’s, and Adam’s, aesthetic capacities as emergent and evolutionary rather than as alien or revolutionary, James makes the same basic move that Palladianism does; he produces a lineage between the radically new and what might, considered differently, be an opposed past. He links Adam’s aesthetic abilities to his business abilities in several ways. The first connection is for the most part implicit. If wealth can be transformed from a monetary form to an artistic form, then might not the skills associated with acquiring the one form be related to those associated with acquiring the other? The answer in *The American* is “absolutely not!” Christopher Newman, while highly skilled at the acquisition of money, cannot, doesn’t even care to, tell the difference between a great old painting and a poor copy painted while he waits. Like Adam, and even in the same terms, Newman became “aware of the prime throb of the mania of the ‘collector,’” but unlike Newman, Adam is successful, from the outset of the novel,

both as a skilled connoisseur, and as someone who has bought his way, through Maggie, into royalty (*Am* 16).

As I have noted, in my reading of *The American*, there is a discontinuity between what Newman can do in the business world and what he can do in the world of art and the Bellegarde's related world of representation and history. It is this discontinuity that prevents his acceptance into that social dimension. The fact that Adam has accomplished aesthetic adeptness and married Maggie to a Prince suggests that the discontinuity which plagued Newman does not exist for Verver. James writes that it is by "a mere revolution of the screw" that "his whole intellectual plane" has changed (*GB* 1:141). The metaphor recalls, of course, the governess's idea, in *The Turn of the Screw*, that nothing radically different is required of her to address her uncanny situation, that it requires, "only another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue" (*TS* 295). Applied to Adam's case, it implies that he is engaging, in his aesthetic pursuits, not a new faculty, but another degree of that which he had been using to make money. The screw translates force from one plane into another. The correlation between the process of getting rich and the process of becoming a first-rate connoisseur is emphasized again by Adam's notion that in "the long process of his introduction to all present interests" he "had depended all on himself" (*GB* 1:149). Adam the connoisseur, like Adam the businessman, is self-made. Newman's economic past is given in terms that would render it incompatible with European aesthetics; he has acquired his money through energy and through single-mindedness, a lack of imagination. Verver's money-making methods are rendered in metaphorical terms, and it is also suggested that it was not achieved merely with effort, but also through "transcendent calculation and imaginative gambling," terms which suggest something more creative than simple grabbing and piling-up (*GB* 1:144). Adam has, in his investing, applied "[v]ariety of imagination...fatal in the world of affairs unless

so disciplined as not to be distinguished from monotony” (GB 1:128). James produces a fantastical set of figures which make of Adam’s business consciousness something medieval, something like a combination of shrine and alchemical laboratory:

The spark of fire, the point of light, sat somewhere in his inward vagueness as a lamp before a shrine twinkles in the dark perspective of a church; and while youth and early middle-age, while the stiff American breeze of example and opportunity were blowing upon it hard, had made of the chamber of his brain a strange workshop of fortune. This establishment, mysterious and almost anonymous, the windows of which, at hours of highest pressure, never seemed, for starers and wonderers, perceptibly to glow, must in fact have been during certain years the scene of an unprecedented, a miraculous white-heat, the receipt for producing which it was practically felt that the master of the forge couldn’t have communicated even with the best intentions. (GB 1:127)

There is something transcendent about the way Adam has made his money. The suggestion is that through “a special genius,” he has mysteriously transformed, as in an alchemical process, something baser into gold (GB 1:127). His abilities as a money-maker are associated with religion, magic, alchemy and craftsmanship; each of these skills involves transformation, and each borders on the province of art. Adam crosses over into this province when he deploys metaphor, as when he figures the Prince as a Palladian church. Maggie’s abilities, as they emerge in the second volume of the novel, can be genealogically traced, and can be understood as not just made possible by, but also connected in more integral ways with, the fact of her fortune. Her wealth is, in two ways, rightfully hers and not, as in the case of Isabel Archer, grafted on through a secret trick.

The continuity James suggests, through his presentation of Adam's past and that character's own consideration of it, between the faculties and mental states applied in investing, and those applied as a connoisseur, is extended through a set of suggestions that there is a continuity between the discipline of the collector/connoisseur and that of the artist. At this point one might remark on the fact that I have demonstrated the connection between the faculties employed in Adam's money-making, and those employed in connoisseurship, through his figurations and by noting the suggestions that something akin to figuration is involved in both disciplines. Thus, Adam is already not only a critic but also an artist of the kind that Maggie is to become, and he has employed art as an integral element in his entire development. To point this out is to notice that there are two ways, two structural models, in which James has art working here and elsewhere in this novel and in the prefaces. In one, art occupies a position of privilege by virtue of its position at the top of a hierarchy of human endeavors, and in the other art as figuration occupies a position of privilege through being the indispensable, unique agent of intentional transformation throughout human experience. Adam understands himself as "equal somehow with the great seers, the invokers and encouragers of beauty – and he didn't after all perhaps dangle so far below the great producers and creators" (*GB* 1:141). As such, he understands himself as raised above the business world and yet not to the level of artist. He is also, in the first volume, an enthusiastic producer of figures.

In his essay "Ozymandias and the Mastery of Ruins," Stuart Culver explores James's later understanding of the successes and failures of the New York Edition. In it he claims that James's relation to the economic failure of the New York Edition is not as simple as some have hitherto assumed, not simply one in which he understood it as "another example of the reading public's failure to recognize the genius of the 'Master'" (Culver 39). Culver understands James's reference to Shelley's

“Ozymandias” in its full Romantic sense, a sense that would render its failure as fortunate, as an opportunity for art. Culver goes on to claim that James deliberately structures his New York Edition ironically – that he deliberately avoids a certain kind of success in order to preserve the unique character of his mastery. Such considerations exceed the scope of this study, but what emerges as useful here is the idea that James is not constructing his art to be complete, to resist all reinterpretation and reorganization, or to forestall a return to it – and the related idea that art and criticism must partake of each other in order to effect transformation. As the prefacer/critic/historian of *The Portrait of a Lady* has reached back into that text to transform its meaning through a group of interactive metaphors, so have Adam Verver and the narrator of *The Golden Bowl* reached back through a set of figures to reorganize the past into the preface to a transcendent present. The same prefacer tells us, inversely, that the text in its construction, in its forward movement, is prepared, structured, for the critic’s return. As such it must be created with a critical faculty already engaged. What has changed, since the quarrel in *The Portrait of a Lady* between the creative and critical, between the futurist and the historical, is that now these two functions are working together in an alternately hierarchized tandem. When the prefacer of *The Golden Bowl* writes of “the march of [his] present attention” he refers to the two, artist and critic marching forward, and then the two, critic and artist marching back into history. One is a critic, collector, connoisseur, or prefacer when the backward movement predominates, and one is an artist, purveyor, or novelist when the forward movement predominates. It is interesting to note that when Maggie awakens to her new mode of conception in the second volume, Adam’s conscious activity diminishes to a minimum. As with the model in which art occupies a position in front of criticism, when Maggie moves out into innovation, into a re-figuration of the realities of the family’s relational matrix, Adam must step back.

Adam's Palladian church metaphor, by virtue of its intradiegetic connections, and by virtue of its actual historical referents, can't perform the kind of transformations that Maggie's metaphors can, but, in addition to providing a history along which Maggie's figuratively-driven art can travel, it enacts, within its vehicle, one of the features of figuration that allow it to be transformative. Palladian architecture is noted for its attention to setting. This is one of the features that rendered it so attractive to the Georgian ruling class who employed it in their marvelously landscaped country homes. In Adam's metaphor, however, the Palladian church is set down in a quiet urban square too small for it. Instead of the building being adapted to its setting, then, the setting adapts, rather mysteriously, to the building. The transformative power of metaphor itself is rooted in a dynamic structurally identical to that in Adam's metaphor – that is, in the fact that figuration doesn't only represent and illuminate conditions, but that conditions are transformed through the application of figures.

Though Adam does step back as Maggie steps up to do battle with the forces that would deprive her of her domestic security, he looks on as Maggie takes up weapons he has forged, and he reenters the action as Maggie's purposes and his own successfully coincide at the end of the novel. Adam's purposes are cultural and social – he intends to use his arts and his art to enact a kind of transformation in the American public. Maggie's purposes are domestic and personal – she intends to restore unity in her nuclear family. James makes it clear that Adam's skills don't extend to the personal. The actual scene in which we are given the Palladian church metaphor and many of the figurative references to Adam's marvelous abilities as a businessman and as a connoisseur is one in which Adam is being stalked and ultimately trapped in the billiard-room by an annoying female houseguest. In his person he is small and unremarkable; his physical description is rather Trumanesque.

He allows Maggie to set him up with Charlotte, and he awaits her approval before finalizing his engagement. Though Maggie's marriage to the Prince is arranged by him in the sense that he "purchases" Amerigo, the personal dimension of the marriage is Maggie's affair. Though it is quite clear that, no matter how hard Maggie works to keep the matter of their respective spouse's affair from emerging into the social and discursive dimension, Adam knows that something of the sort is going on, he doesn't actively engage the situation. He allows Maggie to handle it.

Maggie uses the Pagoda metaphor to understand the set of relations as they existed before she begins to act, to serve as a model in which she can deploy a representation of herself, and to make sense of the results, the implications, of her first movement in the campaign to win her husband back. The metaphor's temporal ambiguity, which works to allow and support the metaphor's predictive functions, is in the service of extradiegetic understanding. Enabled by the ambiguity of attribution, the temporal ambiguity opens the text upward and outward into the narrator's and reader's spheres, allowing at those levels further lateral connections within and without the text. As I have noted in connection with the Palladian church metaphor, there is an inverse relation between solid intradiegetic connections and the availability of the metaphor to extradiegetic uses. In order for it to be of any use, however, as a conduit between reading dimensions, even the pagoda must be anchored in the action. The metaphor must be, to some extent, Maggie's. James does, as I have indicated, sheer shy of narrating Maggie as without a doubt thinking about the pagoda. He does, at the same time, clearly and diegetically suggest that the metaphor belongs to her. James writes that it is "to her considering mind" that she "ceased to merely to circle and scan the elevation" (*GB* 2:4). When he writes that "[t]he pagoda in the blooming garden figured the arrangement," he positively, if subtly, indicates, through the application of the past tense, that the figuration occurs within the action, and therefore

that it is Maggie's. He also suggests, less directly, more circumstantially, through the fact that Adam has already advanced the Palladian church metaphor, that if he has done this kind of figuring, so might she. The connection to the action is more naturally, more mimetically rooted by making the metaphor available, and reasonably apt, from her perspective. Restricting the possibilities to those available from Maggie's perspective, it is clear that she likely uses the metaphor primarily as a way of understanding what she has done in waiting for the Prince at their home instead of at Adam and Charlotte's. This minute shift she has made in the pattern of their relations corresponds to the moment in the metaphor when she approaches the pagoda and touches it.

The implications, for Maggie, of this minute shift and the figuration of it, are tremendous. As such it is remarkable that she so quickly moves away from both the literal and figurative manifestations of the event. This moment in which she awakens to her creative abilities remains a significant point in a continuum along which her historical eye travels, but she doesn't hang on to it, and her returns to it are in passing or as a reference for further action. James writes, in a mode which addresses both intra- and extradiegetic dimensions: "Before the subsequent passages, much later on, it was to be said, the flame of memory turned to an equalizing glow, that of a lamp in some side-chapel in which incense was thick (GB 2:11). It is as if the narrator, eerily, has already anticipated this study and included it in a history looked back on. As I have noted, the pagoda metaphor gives way quickly to a riotous series of metaphors that refigure the action, and that through their vividness and appeal to affect, steal the attention away. Within this set of scenes Maggie has, like Isabel Archer and Eliot's Dorothea Casaubon, her meditation, her watch, before the fire. Unlike those two young wives, who reflect with horror upon the hitherto unrealized prison their marriage has produced, Maggie, presented as she is with what is on the face of it a

worse domestic catastrophe, creates, out of the watching itself, more possibility than she is initially willing to acknowledge. Here her act, itself achieved through figuration, in which she generates figures, becomes significant, turns into a weapon which can produce more weapons. She now, like the young Adam, has a workshop, a forge. As he was “polishing and piling up his arms,” so now she is “no longer playing with blunt and idle tools, with weapons that didn’t cut” (*GB* 1:144, 2:9).

Maggie’s subsequent project is regularly figured in heroic and warlike terms, but if she is engaged in a war, it is a cold one. She conducts it without an explicit declaration of war – Maggie never actually accuses anyone of anything – and she carries out most of her campaigns in secret. The primary weapon of a secret agent is intelligence; the agent must have information not available to the other side. In addition, the agent must keep her status as an agent secret from the other side – the enemy must not know that the agent knows. Maggie’s initial knowledge of her situation is achieved through figuration. Just as Dorothea Casaubon tentatively feels for the first time “that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband’s mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither,” and as Isabel Archer “had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end,” Maggie comes to understand the reality of her marriage through contemplation of an architectural figure (Eliot 125, *PL* 2:189). Figuration becomes Maggie’s primary tool in organizing intelligence. Without the ability to reorganize intelligence, Maggie wouldn’t be able to apply to her purposes the key secret once she comes into possession of it. Dorothea is unable to apply what she learns of Will Ladislaw’s history, and Isabel, at the end of the novel, has yet to bring the secret of Pansy Osmond’s birth to bear on her marriage, but Maggie’s figurative methodology allows her to productively engage the secret history of her husband and best friend/mother-in-

law. With the secret in hand, she “turns” the Prince, who henceforth operates as a “mole” in the enemy camp. She likewise turns Fanny Assingham – who had been a confidante of the Prince, and to a certain extent of Charlotte’s – to her purposes.

In all three cases, the wives come to understand the essence of their situation before they have proof or even specific information about it. As such, they each have to come to terms with their insight as insight, and must choose to trust in a sort of intuition that is both delivered through figuration and given force by it. The coming to terms involves a refiguring of what has gone before, an engagement of the present with the refigured history, and then a stance, possibly a strategy for movement into the future. For Isabel Archer this means that, until she has the secret fully in hand, she must readjust her understanding of herself as good in the Emersonian sense, that she must understand herself as guilty in order to make sense out of what has happened to her. Osmond’s ascendancy, until she has the secret from the Countess Gemini, relies on this guilt. Maggie, too must make an adjustment, and she briefly occupies the position that Isabel finds herself in between intuitive knowledge and proof as “she reflected that she should either not have ceased to be right – that is to be confident – or have recognised that she was wrong” (*GB* 2:6).

Maggie must actually make two decisions. The first is to accept that she has been wrong in her understanding of the relational matrix. The arrangement has hitherto been, for Adam and Maggie, a kind of triumph, as “they liked to think they had given their life this unusual extension and this liberal form, which many families, many couples, and still more many pairs of couples, wouldn’t have found workable” (*GB* 2:5, 6). This perspective is supported by that of their social circle, is “distinctly brought home to them by the bright testimony, the quite explicit envy, of most of their friends, who had remarked to them again and again that they must, on all the showing, to keep such terms, be people of the highest amiability” (*GB* 305). The “ivory tower,

visible and admirable doubtless from any point on the social field, had risen stage by stage” (*GB* 2:6). What she must accept, on scant hard evidence, is the fact that hands other than hers and Adam’s have been at work on the pagoda, from the inside, and that the presence of these agents signifies something different, something not right, about it. Even before the advent of the pagoda and of her first move, Maggie has been less able to enjoy the idea of the family arrangement, but she has been unwilling to interrogate her attitude. This unwillingness itself signals an ethical dilemma; her “reluctance to ask herself with proportionate sharpness why she had ceased to take comfort in the sight of it represented accordingly a lapse from that ideal consistency on which her moral comfort almost at any time depended” (*GB* 2:6). She seeks to avoid, at this juncture, an engagement with her own unwillingness to ask herself why she doesn’t feel good anymore about the arrangement, because her new mode of seeing has made it impossible to dismiss her past as she has been used to. James writes here, in a curious formulation, that in order “[t]o remain consistent, she had always been capable of cutting down, more or less, her prior term” (*GB* 2:6). She has always been able, when necessary, to reduce, either in importance or in scope, the implications of her past on her present.

The second thing that Maggie must do here is to move forward. In order for her to shift out of her previous policy, which involves a strict adherence to the idea that the status quo is ideal, into her new methodology, which involves a regular refiguration of past, present, and future, she has to be able to fully engage her history. Maggie is not committed, as is Isabel Archer, to an aesthetically poor philosophy which requires her to be good. She is committed to her primary relations and is willing to be wrong; wrong for her isn’t so much ethically construed, it’s instead primarily a question of equivocation. She is open, then, to the transforming and empowering host of figurations that follow in the wake of the pagoda. Thus is the

dynamic, in which failure precedes and enables creative production, reenacted here in the central crux of the novel. The set of figures – the wet spaniel, the clinging mother, the dancer going through her costumes and jewelry, the weapons, the bare blade, the mantle of history, the timid tigress, the actress on stage – following the pagoda are worked out in a narrative space between diegesis and direct interior discourse, with liberal application of free indirect discourse, and so they work to transform Maggie intra- and extradiegetically. Narrative irony is reduced to a minimum as Maggie and reader are shifting their ideas about who she now is and what she can do. The gap between what a reader knows of the affair and what Maggie knows of it is here being filled as Maggie's intuition is fueled and embodied by these figures.

Maggie's strategic pattern, once she has figured and made a move, is to watch for signs that her move has had an effect. The characteristics of that effect inform her of the disposition and intentions of her opponents. She then refigures, acts and watches. I will refer to this methodology, this approach, as "management," to distinguish it from Charlotte's approach, which I will generally refer to as "policing." Because history, the present and the future are all regularly open to refiguration, there is a great deal of risk involved in this approach. In it she is given only a "temporary safety," a "hand to mouth success" (*GB* 2:140, 141). The figures, the metaphors, variable themselves in their very structure, that Maggie employs vary as well in their application. Some are more firmly attributable to her, and are more firmly rooted in the action; some work to a greater or lesser degree with an extended delegation, or focalization of character; some are exotic in the sense that tenor and vehicle are unusually paired; some, inversely, run the two so closely together that it seems as if the tenor is figured as itself. As Maggie's skill increases, she can apply her figurations in real time, watching them as they work toward her ends.

At a period in the narrative shortly before Maggie has the secret – which will be revealed in the history of the bowl itself – and in which she is already thoroughly engaged in her secret war, she determines it necessary to keep dialogue between herself and the Prince to a minimum so as to forestall the possibility that he might “make up” to her (*GB* 2:140). She fears that she loves him “too helplessly” for her to negotiate at this point were he to offer terms based on an indication from her that she felt herself wronged. She can “breathe no charge,” she can’t have him to any degree acting as if “she had either lost faith or suffered by a feather’s weight in happiness” (*GB* 2:140). To this end, Maggie for a period of a week in which she and Amerigo are without Adam and Charlotte in London must keep their intimacy to a minimum without arousing, as a result, his suspicion. Her method for naturally keeping personal interaction between herself and the Prince to a minimum is to figure them publicly, to figure them in a very real sense as who they are. Maggie figures the Prince and herself “as if they were bazaar-opening royalties,” and engages the company of the Assinghams in the character of an ever-present entourage, as “revolving subordinate presences that float in the wake of greatness” (*GB* 2:144, 145). In order to keep the Colonel and Fanny in their company, Maggie “had but to have the fancy of presenting herself, of presenting her husband, in a certain high and convenient manner, to make it natural they should go about with their gentleman and their lady” (*GB* 2:145). James notes that by this time, Maggie “showed something of the glitter of consciously possessing the constructive, the creative hand,” the suggestion being that this glitter is an aid in presenting herself as a princess, and further suggesting that art can be made into something else, in this case, an elevation of social station (*GB* 2:145).

It is in the spirit and in the service of this representation of herself and the Prince as royalty that Maggie goes to the British Museum, as she has once done early

in her marriage, to do some research on the history of “the Prince’s race” (*GB* 2:147). The connections become rather dense here as the narrative approaches the moment when the secret is revealed to Maggie. She goes to the museum with Fanny, declining to invite the Prince himself. Fanny understands Maggie’s decision to leave the Prince behind as due to “the shade of irony that in these ambiguous days her husband’s presence might be felt to confer practically on any tribute to his transmitted significance” (*GB* 2:148). As is often the case, Fanny partially understands Maggie’s purposes. She understands Maggie’s purpose as trying – through a return to the museum, and a return to the frame of mind in which she previously, “for the glory of the name she bore,” came as a new wife – to shore up her attitude toward her marriage (*GB* 2:147). Fanny can’t know that this reinvigoration of Maggie’s royal heritage is in the service of an extended, enacted, figure – a figure enacted in a secret quest for information. What Maggie in turn can’t know is that as she has launched herself, in her own person, into this extended figure, she is about to act, as does a delegate, unexpectedly – and thereby come, equally unexpectedly, into possession of the key secret.

Maggie goes to Bloomsbury in search of the Prince’s public history, to inspire her representation of themselves as “a pair of young sovereigns,” which she is projecting in order to buy time as she digs for knowledge about the Prince’s personal history (*GB* 2:149). She obtains the essential knowledge, however, not through or in the enactment of that representation, but through a lapse in it, a retreat from the requirements of acting it out. On arrival at the museum, she dismisses her carriage, because even prior to visit, “[s]he had known she should find herself, as the consequence of such an hour, in a sort of exalted state, under the influence of which a walk through the London streets would be exactly what would suit her best” (*GB* 2:154). She is planning a lapse from the maintenance of her act, planning an

indulgence in “a low taste...that she had of late for so many reasons been unable to gratify’ (*GB* 2:154). She entertains “a shy hope of not going too straight,” to “wander a little wild,” is “what she had more or less been plotting for” (*GB* 2:155). It is on this walk that she encounters the little shop and the golden bowl – and purchases it, to be delivered later, as a gift for her father on his birthday. This is, of course, the very bowl that Charlotte and the Prince consider and reject, because it is flawed, as a wedding gift from Charlotte to Maggie at the outset of the novel – and which serves as evidence that the Prince and Charlotte not only knew each other as lovers prior to the Prince’s marriage to Maggie, but more importantly, that they needed to keep that prior relation a secret.

Before going on to consider the bowl itself as a metaphor within this representational system, it is important to consider the dynamic which has produced its discovery. When Maggie sets out to enlist historical knowledge to invigorate and support her representation of herself and the Prince as public figures in need of an entourage, she builds into the plot a retreat from that representation, a retreat into the personal and into the unscripted. The subsequent success, which comes not directly from the knowledge and inspiration gained at the museum, is unexpected, unrecognized at first, and yet is at the same time plotted. James’s representational weave here is remarkably dense. The bowl’s discovery is both plotted and unexpected; Maggie is both a princess and playacting the part of a princess. A quest to support the figure of a public persona in order to find personal knowledge leads through public records indirectly to personal knowledge that threatens to become too public. Here is an intradiegetic instance of the dynamic Culver derived from James’s response to the economic failure of the New York Edition, in which the promise of ongoing artistic agency is ensured by plotting against outright success. As in Milton, the fortunate fall is a part of the original plan. Here also is Maggie’s enactment of the

movement between the prefaces and the fiction in the New York Edition, in which James moves between the personal and literary, back and forth in time like a spider, reweaving, spinning and trailing silken threads of newly figured narrative. In all these endeavors, the plotter, the artist, the maker of figures, runs the risk of the unexpected success and failure. The discovery of the bowl, and the bowl itself, instance the structure of artistic agency and of its product. The discovery is a success achieved through a kind of failure, a success which is in itself the revelation of an earlier failure, a failure which had previously been figured as a resounding success.

This tight set of dynamics is part of a general progression in this novel, and in the progress of the Jamesian manner, from a looser relation between tenor and vehicle to a tighter one. This progress ultimately results in an identity between the two, an identity already to a clear degree enacted in Maggie's figure of herself and the Prince as "young sovereigns" (*GB* 2:149). This progression can be rather simply understood as analogous to a move from simile to metaphor, though in the actual narration of the figures in this and other texts James renders the distinction between those two types of figure meaningless, applying them as best renders the attribution, or other specific purposes in each case. I will address the extradiegetic, intertextual, and theoretical implications of this tight bond between tenor and vehicle after the exposition of how metaphors work within the action.

The bowl in itself is an amazing artistic achievement, but an achievement that is unforeseeably negated because of an invisible flaw, which produces a hidden crack. The interesting and ironic thing about the bowl is that as a metaphor in this representational environment it functions rather rudimentarily. It operates centrally, literally, as the key to the sensationalist plot, but it doesn't have much extension, nor does it perform the kind of multidimensional tasks that even Adam's Palladian church does. It isn't, for the characters, a useful metaphor, though James has Adam and the

Prince, in direct discourse, indicate rather obviously that the bowl refers, at least in part, to Amerigo. Adam, in the latter part of his conversation on the architectural amiability of the Prince, tells his son in law that he is “a pure and perfect crystal” (*GB* 1:138). Amerigo replies, “Oh if I’m a crystal I’m delighted that I’m a perfect one, for I believe they sometimes have cracks and flaws – in which case they’re to be had very cheap!” (*GB* 1:139). James even helps the critic on his way to working out the extensions of this metaphor when he has both the Prince and Adam refrain from adding that “there had been certainly no having *him* cheap” (*GB* 1:140). It’s function as a plot-device is signaled in a very obvious way by the conversation between Charlotte and the shopkeeper as she considers purchasing it. He goes so far as to say that one could discover its flaw “by dashing it with violence – say upon a marble floor,” foreshadowing its end exactly as it will happen (*GB* 1:116). The bowl as vehicle of a metaphor doesn’t link up seamlessly to the Prince as tenor. James offers, through Maggie as a focalizer, the arrangement between the four main characters as another tenor, but the subject of what the bowl means can’t produce any positive results because the tenor could be, and has been read as, too many things. Brenda Austin Smith has, I think, the best take on the symbolic function of the bowl in this text. She reads the bowl not as “a counterfeit antique that becomes a real symbol, but as a flawed object that becomes a counterfeit symbol” (Smith 53). She argues that “it is too evasive and too weak as a physical object to convene and manage all of the meanings that demand articulation through it” (Smith 53). James doesn’t use controlling metaphors, doesn’t use metaphors to govern or encode the meaning of a whole text. The title of this novel serves to signal its plot-type, its membership in the sensation fiction genre; the bowl is the essential plot-device, the clue to the dark secret the heroine must discover. However, as a metaphor, it is only the simplest opening move in a developing representational dynamic. Perhaps its most important

significance, for this study, is in its negative example, its contrast to the later metaphors, stunning in their multidimensional extensions and in the subtlety of their vehicle/tenor relations, and its position at the starting point of a progression from simplicity to complexity.

The restricting pressure that forces characters and narrator to deploy such subtlety and power in figural creation and critique is the necessity of not saying anything literally. This restricting pressure and creative response, akin to the familiar phenomenon in which a blind person learns to respond to mysterious cues and sense the existence of material objects at a distance, manifests itself perhaps most dramatically in the night-time confrontation between Maggie and Charlotte on the terrace at Fawns. This is another instance of the kind of duel Isabel Archer and Serena Merle fight at the convent toward the end of *the Portrait of a Lady*. Maggie and Charlotte engage in what James calls “a *high* fight,” conducted in an “occult manner,” and in which they display unusual powers of understanding and communication (*GB* 2:143).¹³ While the interaction, in itself, is a genteel and mild, if difficult, moment between two old friends with a difference, James figures it as an a mystically tinged duel between the heroine and a dangerous beast who has escaped its gilded cage in order to hunt her down. Again, Maggie survives the encounter through self-figuration and a strategic failure, which allows her to deny Charlotte knowledge while she remains free to acquire more. When Maggie notices, through the windows, that Charlotte has left the bridge table and passed into the adjoining room, that the “splendid shining supple creature was out of the cage, was at large,” she begins to devise a strategy, to create a character that she can successfully employ. Out on the terrace, the duel is engaged when Charlotte enters the circle of light cast by the windows. It is fought with looks, postures, comments on the weather, and most

¹³ The italics are James's.

effectively, silences. Once they have reentered the house, they turn to stand, face to face, in a room that James has figured as “having, with all its great objects as ordered and balanced as for a formal reception, been appointed for some high transaction, some real affair of state” (*GB* 2:246). Charlotte asks, “Have you any ground of complaint of me? Is there any wrong you consider I’ve done to you?” (*GB* 2:247). Maggie allows Charlotte to dominate the exchange; she does not figure herself this time as herself, the princess, but as herself as she once and to a degree still feels – weak and poor in comparison with Charlotte. Her refiguration of herself is rendered in detail:

They stood in the center of the immense room, and Maggie could feel that the scene of life her imagination had made of it twenty minutes before was by this time sufficiently peopled. These few straight words filled it to its uttermost reaches, and nothing, either, was now absent from her consciousness of the part she was called on to play in it. Charlotte had marched straight in, dragging her rich train; she rose there beautiful and free, her whole aspect and action attuned to the firmness of her speech. Maggie had kept the shawl she had taken out with her, and, clutching it tight in her nervousness, drew it round her as if huddling in it for shelter, covering herself with it for humility. She looked out as from under an improvised hood – the sole headgear of some poor woman at somebody’s proud door; she waited even like the poor woman; she met her friend’s eyes with recognitions she couldn’t suppress. (*GB* 2:247)

Maggie cannot let Charlotte think that she is in a position to act. She understands that if Charlotte feels threatened, she will go directly to Adam and force him to mediate the issue. Maggie allows Charlotte to believe that she has backed down, and lies to

Charlotte, knowing that Charlotte knows that she is lying. Charlotte believes that she has maneuvered Maggie into a position in which she has been forced to lie and from which she will be bound to uphold the lie. For reasons that I will clarify later in my discussion of the difference between Maggie's methodology and Charlotte's, when Maggie tells Charlotte, "You must take it from me that I've never thought of you but as beautiful, wonderful and good...Upon my honour," the appeal to honour means something different to Maggie than it does to Charlotte (*GB* 2:251). It refers to a flexible interpretation of the common good, instead of a pre-existing code.

For much of the second volume, Maggie works without the direct help of Adam, though she brings the Prince and Fanny Assingham into her mission. The infidelity, the bowl, and the prior relations between the Prince and Charlotte are never mentioned between them, but there are numerous hints throughout the volume that Adam knows in some way, though what he knows and how he knows is always off the page. Eventually, once Charlotte is boxed in by her own belief that she has won, Adam is brought into a fuller understanding of Maggie's situation. There comes a time, as Maggie is working out the final moves in her plans, when she needs Adam to act, and it is in their interactions at this time that some of the most remarkable figurative dynamics are brought into play.

Maggie and Adam work out their end game in the same place where they first conceived the pagoda. It was on a particular bench at Fawns that they addressed the imbalance created by Maggie's marriage, and it was there that Maggie suggested the addition of Charlotte as a companion and aid to Adam – though at that time the idea of their marriage was yet unthought. James often stages significant discussions on benches outdoors, and the significance of this exchange is further highlighted by its inverse correlation to the two bench scenes in *The Portrait of a Lady*. In those two scenes, proposals of marriage are being refused; here in these two scenes, a marriage

is set up and another is preserved. Adam and Maggie are both adepts at the kind of thing they are about to engage in. It is not a duel, such as that Maggie and Charlotte have just had, but it is, nonetheless, just as dangerous and requiring just as much, if not more, of the same kind of skill and courage.

As the two sit there on the bench, they very carefully move together toward mutual understanding. The danger is that one of them may speak, actually name, the problem. Such an utterance would fix the situation within a frame of meaning which then would determine, in unacceptably narrow terms, the possibilities for further action. In order to avoid any direct reference to their current situation, they discuss the situation which existed prior to the decision made the first time they sat like this on the bench, structuring the discussion of the past so that it illuminates the present. The past, rendered so, stands in for the “immediate connexion”, and this rendering the past as present is supported by the present act of sitting on the bench in the same way (*GB* 2:256). Just as Maggie “won” her duel with Charlotte through an enhanced figuration of herself as her past self, now Adam and Maggie manage to retain their agency, to retain “a provision full of possibilities,” through a figuration of themselves as they once were (*GB* 2:255). The more precise their mutual understanding becomes, and the closer they come to making an actual decision about what they will do next, the more tricky the interaction becomes. In order to not come too quickly or clumsily to the point, the two “were avoiding the serious, standing off anxiously from the real, and they fell again and again, as if to disguise their precaution itself, into the tone of the time that came back to them from their other talk, when they had shared together this same refuge” (*GB* 2:257). They actually repeat spontaneously, from their previous talk, some of the same question and answer sets to each other, and marvel at the repetition. They display a marvelous memory of their prior conversation, repeating parts of it as if it were some sort of ritual. This invocation of a significant history is

what precedes and enables the “occult” understanding and communication that they then enter into.

The full understanding of their situation is achieved through what they don’t say. Once they have successfully worked their way into a magical, aesthetic, space, they are safer from the consequences of the literal. Adam now sees Maggie as “a creature consciously floating and shining in a warm summer sea, some element of dazzling sapphire and silver, a creature cradled upon depths, buoyant among dangers, on which fear or folly or sinking otherwise than in play was impossible” (*GB* 2:263). The shape of their larger situation is rendered, aesthetically, in the space between them. This vision of Maggie as a beautifully conscious sea creature becomes in itself a medium of communication. Adam can feel her experience, as the “beauty of her condition was keeping him at any rate, as he might feel, in sight of the sea...the whole thing would shine at him and the air and the splash and the play became for him too a sensation” (*GB* 2:263). He can do more than share sensation, however, as this shared and figured experience can “pass further into knowing” (*GB* 2:263). At the moment before decision is to be reached, when the possibility of actually naming the problem again arises, the situation is also again rendered, through another beautiful figure, that is even more fragile:

This was the moment in the whole process of their mutual vigilance in which it decidedly *most* hung by a hair that their thin wall might be pierced by the slightest wrong touch. It shook between them, this transparency, with their very breath; it was an exquisite tissue, but stretched on a frame, and would give way the next instant if either so much as breathed too hard. She held her breath, for she knew by his eyes, the light at the heart of which he couldn’t blind, that he was, by

his intention, making sure – sure whether or no her certainty was like his. (*GB* 2:267, 268)

The tissue is that archetypically Jamesian thing that is not a thing – partaking of the relation rather than of the things that bind the relation. In itself it is made very carefully out of absence. It is embroidered of all the little moves which are made to share experience and meaning without ever saying the things that cannot be said – the things that if said would tear the fabric. The tissue exists at the fullest reach of the figural – the farthest that communication can reach from either side without committing a speech act, without going on the record with a literal statement, without incriminating, naming names. This tissue represents a barrier – it figures a limit. The danger of incriminating someone prevents their saying certain things, and in a clear sense, keeps them apart. Here is the failure and the loss. Here is a failure of one kind of communication. Here is also, as one of the threads of their invocation of the past, the nostalgic idea that a certain ease and mutual comfort has been lost. In this fabric, however, the acts of avoidance are woven in simultaneously with acts of communication. The relation between avoidance and communication is more complex than one in which avoidance of one kind of communication engenders another. Communication itself is one of the mechanisms of avoidance. If there is too much silence then names and other naked facts might push forward. The same nostalgic talk – “remounting the stream of time and dipping again, for the softness of the water, into the contracted basin of the past” – that they use in avoiding a too soon and too direct approach to understanding is also used as a code for communication about the present, and then again and at the same time used as an incantation that summons the magical and figural dimension (*GB* 2:258). The primary dynamic relation, however, is the one in which the restrictions on and the absences of literal expression produce, through intention, the beautifully productive figure, real in its effects. The figure is

not only produced by the restrictions and absences, it represents them, and thus becomes a figure of the conditions that create it – yet another type of tight and reciprocal relation between vehicle and tenor.

At the close of the passage, note that there is an extra figure, one in which the relation between tenor and vehicle is even tighter, which goes right to the heart of the creative act as James conceives it.

The intensity of his dependence on it at that moment – this itself was what absolutely convinced her so that, as if perched up before him on her vertiginous point and in the very glare of his observation, she balanced for thirty seconds, she almost rocked; she might have been for the time, in all her conscious person, the very form of the equilibrium they were, in their different ways, equally trying to save. (*GB* 2:268)

The attribution of this metaphor is rendered ambiguous by the transitional construction, “so that, as if.” If the passage read, “convinced her that she was,” it would be possible to attribute the figure to her. As it is, the drive of the syntax produces the ghost of the simpler construction, produces, even on a careful reading – or leaves, even after a careful re-reading – the idea that Maggie is creating the figure. This idea is furthered by the addition of “in all her conscious person,” a phrase suggesting that she as a figure knows that she is one.

The passage parses differently when one finds the referent for the “it.” “It” refers to the condition of Maggie’s certainty being like his. He is depending on, making sure of, the fact that they understand each other though they haven’t spoken out explicitly. He is reading her as the representation of the situation as they must both understand it in order to move on, and he needs this representation to remain steady for a moment, to exist on its own without further reference to names or facts. The passage also suggests, through the geometry and dynamics of the scene, that

Adam is privy to, if not a co-creator of the metaphor, since she is balanced there “in the very glare of his observation.” Adam’s viewing position, then, can be understood variously as only outside of the metaphor and not privy to the situation as figured, both inside and outside the metaphor and not privy to the situation as figured, only outside and privy to the situation as figured, and both inside and outside and privy to the situation as figured. Each one of these possibilities produces a different relation between Adam and the situation as Maggie has rendered and is rendering it. Since what Adam knows is central to the situation as a whole, these differences are important to understandings of the text even down to the level of the plot. The determination of what the relations are between characters and knowledge is left, by the narrator, for readerly judgment and thus is agency imparted to the reader.

The structurally encoded invitation to the audience is furthered in this scene by the representation of relations between tenor and vehicle and between artist and audience. The audience is encouraged, in the above case, through negative structure. Because the set of relations to the metaphor is not fixed securely, the possibility opens for a reader to order them. Reader participation is also encouraged, perhaps more positively, through the construction of the metaphor itself. In the metaphor, Maggie, who is the creator of the figure of the situation, indeed of multiple figures of the situation, becomes herself, in this moment, “in all her conscious person,” the figure of the situation. The artist is the vehicle. At the same time that Maggie is representing, and the representation of, the situation, she is also as herself, along with her representations, a part of the situation. This puts the artist-as-vehicle in a synecdotal relation to the tenor. It also makes the artist-as-her-real-self a part of the tenor. The viewer of this art is Adam, who is also a part of the tenor. The drama can be recast more generally and re-narrated thus: In order for the author and reader to move forward together creatively, there must be an implicit understanding between them as

to the terms of the mimetically represented reality. The sign available to the reader of that understanding is the steadiness of the multiple relations between the author and the representation at any given moment or point in the narration. This becomes a story in which agency has been ceded or granted to the reader through narrative indeterminacy and through partnership with the author. In addition to these structural and visual elements telling a tale about agency-sharing is that ubiquitous Jamesian inversion in which poles exchange places or are rendered as equal. Here, Adam, who has generally occupied authorial-type positions in the representations relations, becomes viewer, audience and reader. It is another case in which artist and critic run along a temporal continuum, exchanging leadership positions depending on the direction in which the author/reader train is traveling. In this case, before author and reader can move on from a crucial moment, the reader must examine carefully the steadiness of the author's relation to the cloud of representations of what has gone on before. It is, in more specific reference to this point, a case in which the author in certain dimensions – the economic, biological, and methodological – becomes the reader in the representational and familial. The free agency figured by the movements of characters who employ these methods – movements back and forth in time, movements from one dimension of existence to another, movements from inside to outside and back, castling-type movements in which polar positions are exchanged, and most importantly the original movement from stasis – models, in perhaps the most obvious novelistic way, movements available to anyone as an approach to his or her own experience.

Once Maggie and Adam have together figured, and figured in, this representation of their history, they can simply posit, in ordinary terms, their next move. The easiness and security in which they move on is a result of the confidence they have in their mutual understanding. Before they go into the actual plans to make

two-and-two of four, however, they make one more reference to the mystical and ritual mode of their encounter. The crisis and culminating moment of their time together is brought on by a question. Maggie has been circuitously leading up to the possibility of Adam leaving England and taking Charlotte with him back to American City, and she suggests, along the way, that she will, because of their emotional bond, make a “victim” of her father (*GB* 2:266). When he asks her, “Say therefore that I *have* had the feelings of a father. How have they made me a victim?” she responds, “Because I sacrifice you” (*GB* 2:267). The ensuing magical moment, figured through the tissue metaphor and the image of Maggie balancing on a point, begins once Adam asks then next question, “But to what in the world?” (*GB* 2:267). The things that can’t be spoken are the names of either Amerigo or Charlotte, and it is in the avoidance of these names that the magical space is generated. In order to read this moment as an allegory for the relation of author and reader, one has to understand that within the metaphor of Maggie balancing on the point, Adam functions as reader, but outside, as the sacrificial victim, he is operating as father/author, the one who has made all the marriages possible. This interpretive reading act, in which one allows the player in the drama to don different roles to play in different narrative dimensions is an essential one if one is to read James in a sufficiently nuanced way.

It is fairly well understood that James, intertextually, reuses elements of characters and scenes, reorganizing them to re-illuminate in different geometries some ongoing narrative, social or literary concerns. In order to make sense of my readings, or of any set of readings that deal with more than one of James’s texts, one has to be aware of this intra-oeuvre possibility. Maggie Verver is made up, in part, of *The American’s* Claire de Cintré and *The Portrait of a Lady’s* Isabel Archer among others; this Prince is made up in part of *The Portrait of a Lady’s* Gilbert Osmond and *The Princess Casamassima’s* Prince Casamassima; Pansy Osmond’s convent is Claire de

Cintré's, etc. Indeed, the connections often are extended beyond the Jamesian oeuvre – Gilbert Osmond is, in one dimension, a reinterpretation of Browning's Duke of "My Last Duchess," who is in his turn, in one dimension, an interpretation of the historical Alphonse II, Duke of Ferrara. I have also mentioned a more structurally similar narrative move in which a character, Maggie, creates a character within a smaller re-figured fictional world, the pagoda in the garden. The move I now refer to, in which reader-function and author-function are exchanged across a narrative boundary is perhaps most closely related to the shifts in reader and narrator functions in a nested narrative such as that in *The Turn of the Screw*. In that narrative, when the unnamed intradiegetic narrator moves across a line separating the world in which he narrates from the world he is narrating, he exchanges the role of narrator for that of audience, because within the next layer of narrative it is Douglass who narrates. Douglass, in turn, sheds the role of narrator and becomes a member of the audience for the governess's narrative. In the case of the Maggie-on-the-point metaphor, within it Adam is audience/reader, but once he leaves the metaphor, he returns to his function as author. In this kind of dynamic, the central narrative has at its heart the unspeakable – just as the governess's narrative cannot articulate the evil at its core, neither can Maggie speak the name of either adulterer in her "account" to Adam. Thinking about the ritual dimension of Maggie and Adam's interactions on the bench at Fawns and the structural similarities between it and the governess's tale can help in understanding why the governess's sacrifice of Miles is unsuccessful and tragic, while Maggie's sacrifice of Adam leads ultimately, in their own view, to success. While the governess sacrifices the boy, Miles, in place of the author/master, Maggie sacrifices the author/father himself, and while Miles actually dies, Adam dies only figuratively. To relate this transformed homology to the author-reader dynamic, one needs to go on past the magical-figural moment to Maggie's clear and explicit response. She tells

Adam, “Why I sacrifice you simply to everything and to everyone” (*GB* 2:269).

Practically, this response allows Maggie to avoid mentioning either of the adulterers or to mention the conditions that make it necessary for the Prince and Charlotte to be separated. It also allows her claim that the split has been inevitable since he married, not because of the adultery, but because he must go with his trophy wife back to complete the work on his museum in American City.

It will be helpful, in order to satisfactorily read this set of scenes as an allegory of author-reader relations, to consider further the similarities and differences between this set and the final scene of *The Turn of the Screw*. Within the magical moment with Adam, Maggie is not only working hard to avoid mentioning Amerigo, but she has to work against prompting Adam to mention Charlotte. In the final scene in *The Turn of the Screw*, the governess forces Miles to utter the name of Peter Quint. The purpose is the same in that the governess needs to attain a mutual reality with Miles. They need to be on the same page as to what is real and why Miles had to return home from school. Maggie and Adam need to be on the same page as to what is real and why Adam has to return home from England. The difference is in the approach of the governess and in her choice of sacrificial victims. While the governess is attempting to force the spectral and uncanny into reality through Miles’s spoken admission, Maggie is trying to render a real relation spectral through an avoidance all round of spoken admission. The governess’s approach is primarily diegetic while Maggie’s is, at heart, mimetic. The emergent story then, about author-reader relations, becomes one in which the author who chooses a mimetic methodology is sacrificed to the good of general reading public, while the author who relies on diegesis sacrifices the readers (Douglass is easily understood as a repetition of Miles), futilely, in the service of her own epistemological security. Note here that this allegorical narrative hasn’t, in its essential elements, strayed too far from the story the old prefacer somewhat satirically

tells about the young author's approach to the originary feminine vision of *The Portrait of a Lady*, a vision which must be preserved in the face of plotting [and] relations. Here in the scene on the bench the reader is saved, through the feminine vision's sacrifice of the author, from the evils arising from diegesis.

Just what are those evils? Within the context of the story itself, the evil is an adulterous relation, and more importantly, the results of exposing that relation. A comparison of Maggie's and Charlotte's methodologies reveals that there is another evil afoot in this narrative – it is Charlotte's approach to experience that allows her to understand and treat what is initially for Maggie and Adam a transcendently beautiful set of relations as a warrant for adultery.

To describe the quadrilateral matrix as merely transcendently beautiful is, of course, to omit the ways in which it is scandalous. Within it are several social transgressions that together are more than sufficient to produce the ensuing problems. Maggie's too-close relationship with her father is suggestive of incest; Adam's marriage to his daughter's friend carries the taint of pedophilia; Adam's "acquisition" of the Prince for his daughter suggests slavery; and the prior relations between the Prince and Charlotte, unconfessed, even before the actual adultery, are virtually adulterous in the context of their marriages to the others. It is against the background of all this moral brinksmanship, and in ignorance of the prior relationship, that Maggie and Adam condone, and even promote, the close relations between Charlotte and the Prince. Charlotte, in order to fulfill her desire, must construct a moral bridge from where she is, in this social context that enables virtual adultery, to where she wants to be – in bed with the Prince. It is not that she ever expresses a personal need to morally justify the enactment of her desire, but in order to gain the consent of the Prince, who, as Adam declares is "a *real* galantuomo," and who convincingly declares his real regard and respect for Maggie, Charlotte must make adultery the right thing to do (*GB*

1:6).¹⁴ Like Merton Densher in *The Wings of the Dove*, the Prince must be convinced that a clearly immoral act, perpetrated against an unlikely character, is in fact morally defensible.

The power that Charlotte marshals in her campaign to have it all must be equal to the task of reworking the economic power that brought her to, and holds her in, her situation. Brought into the family group primarily to correct an imbalance created by the introduction of the Prince, Charlotte's active function is to serve as the group's social secretary, as a companion for the Prince when Maggie and Adam are spending time alone together, and as a companion for Adam when Maggie and the Prince are alone together. As a functionary, she brings nothing except her skills and has no prior value from which to generate power for her own ends in the group. To convince the Prince to engage in her plan and to enact it, she uses the power of common social law, grounded in principles, developed through logic, applied as policy, and preserved by policing.

Any discussion of power and power relations in *The Golden Bowl* would be incomplete without engaging Mark Seltzer's ground-breaking New Historical reading in his *Henry James & the Art of Power*. In it he works to dismiss the long-held notion that James's interest in aesthetics and technique is worked out in a power vacuum – that political and economic powers are absent from the Jamesian canon, both as active subjects and as narrative concerns. Seltzer argues that "a balanced economy of freedom and supervision – an immanent policing so thoroughly inscribed in the most ordinary social practices that it is finally indistinguishable from manners, cooperation, and care – constitutes...both the subject and mode of *The Golden Bowl*" (Seltzer 61). In Seltzer's account, there is no essential difference between Maggie's and Charlotte's approach, except that Maggie's is carried out with greater resources and is thus more

¹⁴ The italics are James's.

successful. Seltzer argues that the Jamesian narrator is working to disguise the relations between love and power, between domestic and economic concerns – "that *The Golden Bowl* displays precisely a criminal continuity between these terms" (Seltzer 66). Though Seltzer's insights into the relations between power and art in this novel are very productive, he misses the difference between the methodologies represented in the first and second volumes.

Charlotte's launches her own campaign against a background appropriate to the tactics she will employ. As the third book of the first volume opens, James gives us Charlotte in glorious medias res, halfway up a grand staircase on her way into "a great official party in the full flush of the London spring time" (*GB* 1:245). He repeats a technique used in *The Portrait of a Lady* – allowing a lapse of years between Charlotte and Adam's marital engagement and our next view of the situation. In the ensuing scene James dramatically gives notice that Charlotte has undergone a transformation from a humble, useful, penniless, friend and guest, to the powerful and glamorous wife of one of the richest men in the world. In this scene Charlotte also gives notice, to Fanny Assingham – who has been a sponsor of the Prince's and Charlotte's membership within the Verver family, and who holds the secret of their previous relationship – that she no longer considers herself bound by a moral obligation, nor by the force of social opinion, to avoid private or public intimacy with the Prince.

The scene itself is a narrative tour de force. Through a deft mix of mimesis and diegesis, James communicates both Charlotte's methodology and the larger network of social power that justifies it. The differences between her approach and Maggie's are clear. In the very first few lines of the novel we are told that Maggie's power, and her romance with the Prince, are underwritten by her father's millions. Her methods and ideas are conceived in private settings. She works things out on a bench

in the garden with Adam, alone before the fire, and in her private sitting room with the Prince. She carries out her plans in quiet, private, one-to-one conversations. James announces here, as he debuts the new Charlotte, that her campaign is to be backed, not by private and economic, but by social and political power structures. She is reintroduced at a large official ambassadorial party which is attended by "a numerosity of royalties," including the king himself (*GB* 1:247). Her position here on the staircase already signals her ascendancy over Maggie, who has left the party before even fully entering in order to return home and attend to a mildly ill Adam. The narrator suggests rather explicitly that she has not only achieved ascendancy over Maggie, but has actually supplanted her:

She was herself in truth crowned, and it all hung together, in light and color and sound: the unsurpassed diamonds that her head so happily carried, the other jewels, the other perfections of aspect and arrangement that made her personal scheme a success, the *proved* private theory that materials to work with had been all she required and that there were none too precious for her to understand and use – to which might be added lastly, as the strong-scented flower of the total sweetness, an easy command, a high enjoyment, of her crisis. (*GB* 1:246)

Charlotte, as the crowned companion of the Prince, not only lays claim to Maggie's place in the social realm, but also to the Prince in his socio-political incarnation. Here again is a representation of the risk involved in delegation and in representation itself. Maggie has explicitly encouraged Charlotte to act as her delegate, to stand in for her as the Prince's companion at the party, and to act as her social representative. What she doesn't yet understand is that delegation and representation come with the risk that delegates will act in their own interests and that the representation will invade the

realm of reality. Standing there on the stairs, Charlotte is waiting for the return of the Prince, who has been summoned to meet with the king. When she catches sight of him on his way back to her, she receives "an impression of all the place as higher and wider and more appointed for great moments...its symbolism of 'State' hospitality both emphasized and refined" (*GB* 1:247). He himself is for her, "though he had quitted her but ten minutes before, still more than the person it pleased her to be left with" (*GB* 1:248). Maggie is interested in the Prince as a lover and a husband; Charlotte wants him as a lover and a prince. He is, for her purposes, enhanced by his contact with the king. The only thing she is missing, within this scenario, is the opportunity to be herself recognized as royalty by royalty.

After the Prince returns from his audience and has escorted Charlotte into the party, and before she can well engage in social activity, Fanny Assingham contrives, with the help of her husband, the Colonel, to separate the luminary couple, and to have a private conversation with Charlotte. Fanny is James's intradiegetic reader, and she has clearly understood Charlotte's announcement. Fanny is concerned about the propriety and the implications of Charlotte and the Prince appearing together as a couple in this social setting. The older woman carefully asks the younger a series of leading questions about the reasons for Maggie's leaving, whether Charlotte is concerned with Adam's well-being, and whether it wouldn't have been better for Charlotte to have returned home instead of Maggie. Charlotte emphasizes to Fanny that her position is not of her own making. She declares that nothing Fanny can say on the subject could upset her: "Indeed, love, you simply *couldn't* even if you thought it necessary – that's all I mean. Nobody could, for it belongs to my situation that I'm, by no merit of my own, just fixed – fixed as fast as a pin stuck up to its head in a cushion. I'm placed – I can't imagine anyone *more* placed" (*GB* 1:256).¹⁵ Charlotte

¹⁵ The italics are James's

justifies her adultery through arguments that are grounded in notions of fairness and justice. Her declaration to Fanny – that her place is not of her own making, that it is given – is the initial premise in an extended, enthememic, set of arguments. Note that already she has shaded the truth. She argues that she has arrived at her place through no "merit" of her own, which is, of course, untrue. It is precisely because of her merits as a companion and as a social adept that she is originally considered to be so perfect as a final member of the foursome. She also neglects to account for her own work in making herself agreeable and useful to the others, both before and after her marriage to Adam. Her premise gains force and meaning, however, through her social function in London society. To identify and claim one's social place here is to bring into play an entire system of behavioral expectations and justifications. To claim one's place in England is to gain access to a chain of authority right through to the king. Charlotte has found a source of power perfectly opposed to that which underwrites Maggie's. Rather than seeking to usurp Maggie's power – underwritten by Adam's millions – she seeks out a power justified in a different realm.

It is in her dispute with Fanny that she first utilizes the discourse available to her under the aegis of that power. Fanny asks if Charlotte ever meets the Prince in private, as well as public settings. Charlotte tells her that she does go to see the Prince in private, and that to do so is to act in accordance with her situation. When Mrs. Assingham warns her, "Don't let it at any rate...make you think too much of your freedom," Charlotte argues that it is precisely the nature of the relationship between Maggie and Adam that produces the freedom, indeed the duty, to be as she is with the Prince (*GB* 1:261). When Fanny bristles against the implications, on both sides, of Charlotte's declaration, Charlotte responds by asking, "You forsake me at the hour of my life when it seems to me I most deserve a friend's loyalty?" (*GB* 1:263). She concludes her argument by asking, "What's a quarrel with me but a quarrel with my

right to recognise the conditions of my bargain?" (*GB* 1:264). James gives Charlotte the terminology of English politics and society, in which one acts in accordance with one's position, in which one's freedoms are derived not from one's essence as a person, but from one's place. In this system loyalty is the essential bond between one individual and another. He also gives her the terminology of the law, the discourse that generates, defends, and justifies the principles generated in the political and social realms.

Here James has not only introduced an alternative to Maggie's system of aesthetic management, but he has once again, this time quite subtly, worked in a variation of the international theme. Maggie's approach is backed by money made in industrial America – Charlotte's approach is backed by the force of European tradition. There is a further symmetry between Maggie's power and Charlotte's. Maggie's fear is that the news of the adultery will get out – to Adam and then further into the social dimension. Charlotte's fear is that Maggie will figure it out – her fear is of Maggie's interiority. Each, when the battle is joined, seeks to make incursions into the other's arena of power. Charlotte watches for signs of Maggie's intelligence, and Maggie moves out into society, first with Charlotte and then, as a "real" princess, with the Prince and the Assinghams.

Charlotte's efforts at the official party are crowned and sealed as she is interrupted in her conversation with Fanny – by a summons to an audience with the king. James runs the risk of being too obvious when he gives us the king as the ultimate interpellator of Charlotte's social identity, and he doesn't make too much of it here at the end of the scene, but the risk is well worth it as the reference to Edward VII is too rich with implications to give up. The king is, of course, not mentioned by name, but he is more than adequately identified when the narrator tells us: "The greatest possible Personage had, in short, according to the odd formula of societies

subject to the greatest personages possible, 'sent for' her" (*GB* 1:264). To invoke this particular king as the recognizer of Charlotte in her connection to the Prince is to bring in to the account the open secret of Edward's numerous extra-marital affairs – affairs that were tolerated by his wife. James makes a rather arch comment through Charlotte's response when she hears that the king has summoned her. She asks, "What in the world does he want to do to me?" (*GB* 1:264, 265). Charlotte is not only receiving recognition, she is receiving recognition of her relationship with the Prince. Charlotte's appeal to the social dimension is enhanced by the specifics of this king's personal habits. The Prince's and her behavior – even Maggie's, when one assumes her implicit approval – is authorized not only through their location in society, but authorized through the example of the ultimate authority. If Edward, as a prince, could survive his day in open court as a witness to his mistress's divorce case, surely Charlotte and her prince needn't fear social exposure.

Fanny understands the implications of this king's summons, and seeks to interest the Prince in her concerns. She understands that the Italian ambassador and the king think of Charlotte as attached to the Prince. She tells him, "They've connected her with you – she's treated as your appendage" (*GB* 1:266). The Prince, however, is still not privy to Charlotte's ultimate goals, and so understands his present relations with Charlotte as innocent. He argues that he is protected from any negative implication by the very fact that Charlotte is his mother-in-law. Charlotte has already addressed this complication, however, through her reference to the relationship between Maggie and Adam. When Charlotte cites the relationship between father and daughter as the cause of the relationship between mother-in-law and son-in-law, she implies that if the one is, as Fanny exclaims "perfectly natural," then so is the other (*GB* 1:262).

Charlotte's next premise in the argument for the legitimacy of her relations with the Prince is as much an appeal to natural law as to social convention. Her claim has been that in wishing to be alone together, Adam and Maggie have implicitly authorized an equal intimacy between Charlotte and the Prince. An appeal to such authority, as well as to fairness, would then allow private intimacy, but would not allow adultery *per se*. In order to justify outright adultery, Charlotte advances a very carefully balanced point. Once she has laid out her argument concerning the demands of her position, Fanny responds, "don't let it make you think too much of your freedom" (*GB* 1:261). She is advising Charlotte of the level of intimacy her position allows. Charlotte then takes the argument to new ground:

"I don't know what you call too much – for how can I not see it as it is? You'd see your own liberty quickly enough if the Colonel gave you the same liberty – and I haven't to tell you, with your so much greater knowledge of everything, what it is that gives such liberty most. For yourself personally of course," Charlotte went on, "you only know the state of neither needing it nor missing it. Your husband doesn't treat you of any less importance to him than some other woman." (*GB* 1:261, 262)

Charlotte is suggesting an inverted version of the "what is good for the goose is good for the gander." Fanny understands her correctly, and is nearly overwhelmed by the implication, asking, "Do you call Mr Verver's perfectly natural interest in his daughter – ?" (*GB* 1:262). She sees that the only way that Charlotte's argument works here is if the unspeakable is occurring between Adam and Maggie. Charlotte's next move is brilliant:

"The greatest affection of which he's capable?" – Charlotte took it up in all readiness. "I do distinctly – and in spite of my having done all I

could think of to make him capable of a greater. I've done, earnestly, everything I could – I've made it, month after month, my study. But I haven't succeeded." (*GB* 1:262)

Her revelation produces two claims. The first, based on what has gone before and thus more explicit, is that the intimacy of Adam's relations with Maggie exceeds the intimacy of his with Charlotte, and that since one reserves one's most intimate relations for one's wife, then Adam is, in some virtual sense, committing incest and adultery. Charlotte's reasoning is grounded in social convention, the cutting edge of common law, and according to the conventions of this society, if one's superiors place one in a position and suggest through example a mode of action, one is bound to act accordingly. Thus, if Adam and Maggie are engaged in a sort of virtual incest, then why should the Prince and Charlotte be inhibited by the fact that they are in-laws? Likewise, if Adam is committing adultery, what prevents Charlotte? The second claim is less explicit, and doesn't directly support the first, but acts in tandem to strengthen the case for outright adultery. It is simply that Adam is not fulfilling his marital obligations. In claiming that his "affection" does not exceed that which he has for Maggie, and in using the term "capable," Charlotte is suggesting impotence on the part of Adam. Her account of having failed at "making him capable of a greater," and the fact that after more than two years they are childless, leaves little doubt as to her meaning. A husband who can't fulfill his basic marital duty can't very well forbid his wife to seek satisfaction elsewhere. Charlotte, in one deft argument, thus accuses Adam of incest, adultery...and impotence.

If Charlotte's rhetorical skills, as applied in her duel with Fanny, are impressive, they are nothing, either in force, subtlety, or duration, in comparison to those applied in convincing the Prince to go along. The logic she uses to convince the Prince is the same she uses to dazzle Fanny. The theory she advances to the Prince is

that "they might enjoy together extraordinary freedom, the two friends, from the moment they should understand their position aright" (*GB* 1:288). Her methodology is again here complementary to Maggie's. Maggie gains insight through figuration. The figure itself moves to the foreground and activates ensuing possibilities. What actually does ensue is not foreseeable, however. Intrinsic to the generative mechanism of metaphor is this possibility for ambivalence and surprise. Though Maggie's goal is clear, the path is not, neither is success conceived as certain. Her only stable referent is a sense of herself – of her integrity. Remember how she served as the guarantor, for herself and Adam, of meaning and reality – poised perfectly as both the reality and representation of the situation. Fanny understands that "astonishing little Maggie" herself is going to have to solve the problem (*GB* 1:280). As she fails in her attempt to make sense of all that Charlotte has told her at the party, Fanny tells the Colonel, "I do begin to feel it – Maggie's the great comfort. I'm getting hold of it. It will be *she* who'll see us through. In fact she'll have to. And she'll be able" (*GB* 1:280). The outcome depends on Maggie's vision.

Charlotte not only believes that she will succeed, she posits that her place vis à vis the Prince is a *fait accompli*. Her goal, the path to it, and her sources of legitimacy and power, remain stable as she works things out with the Prince. She tells the Prince, as she has told Fanny, that her situation is not of her own doing: "There has been plenty of 'doing', and there will doubtless be plenty still; but it's all theirs, every inch of it; it's all a matter of what they've done *to us*" (*GB* 1:289).¹⁶ She works methodically and progressively to get the Prince into a situation that she claims already exists prior to her conception of it. While in Maggie's conception the figuration produces variability in facts, in Charlotte's the invariability of the ultimate fact requires a variation of representation. The narrator tells us that there "were hours

¹⁶ The italics are James's.

when she applied at different times different names to the propriety of their case," that at times "she spoke of their taking refuge in what she called the commonest tact...there were others when it might have seemed, to listen to her, that their course would demand of them the most anxious study and the most independent, not to say original, interpretation of signs" (*GB* 1:288). This is Charlotte's most characteristic rhetorical movement. She employs contradictory representations as she argues toward a predetermined truth. Adam is both an adulterer and impotent; their place is both simply determined and difficult to determine. The over-arching contradictory representation is the one in which Adam and Maggie are at once the authorities in charge and infants who need the guidance of the wiser Charlotte and Prince. Charlotte argues to the Prince first that Adam and Maggie are the authors of the situation, and then second that "they're very, very, simple" – that they must be protected from the realities of the situation they have created (*GB* 1:311). This argument finally wins the Prince over. He responds, "I only see how, for so many reasons, we ought to stand toward them – and how, to do ourselves justice, we do" (*GB* 1:311, 312). Note that the Prince has not only been convinced by Charlotte's argument, but has also caught and mimicked the mode of it. He has worked their obligations and their rights into the same formula – to do one's duty is to realize one's freedom. They immediately make a pact to trust one another and to act in concert toward the others – and are then free to embark on the actual affair:

Then of a sudden, through this tightened circle, as at the issue of a narrow strait into the sea beyond, everything broke up, broke down, gave way, melted and mingled. Their lips sought their lips, their pressure their response, and their response their pressure; with a violence that had sighed itself the next moment to the longest and

deepest of the stillnesses they passionately sealed their pledge. (*GB*
1:312)

James elegantly highlights the sophistry at the heart of Charlotte's justifications – as the two pledge, with a passionate kiss, to protect their respective spouses. The result of this pledge is a coordinated policy designed to at once protect and exploit. In sum: Charlotte has invoked the authority of a social system ultimately grounded in a king who regularly keeps mistresses. In this system, one's place defines the parameters of one's obligations and freedoms. Charlotte, through a carefully orchestrated argument, has defined her place as one in which she is obligated to cheat – justified in having an adulterous affair with the Prince. She inaugurates a policy in which everyone must keep their place, and she enforces that policy through policing the actions of those subject to it.

The contrast between Maggie's approach and Charlotte's should by now be clear. It should also be clear which approach the narrator favors. Charlotte has aligned herself with a system in which power is achieved and maintained through the application of a policy. This policy justifies itself through an appeal to universal and immutable principles – such as the divine right of kings, the principle of fairness, and natural law. The connections between these principles and specific policies are drawn out through rhetorical argument in a public sphere. The policies, once justified, are understood as permanent – their function is to remain stable, unchanging, in the face of individual experience. They are enforced through policing. The act of policing is represented as guaranteeing “public safety” and “security.” Action is taken in the name of the law, but the name of the law keeps changing. This system must be able to claim that it has risen naturally or necessarily from basic principles, and that its product, power, is in the service of these principles. What James shows is that, for Charlotte at least, and thus potentially for others, power is not operating in the service

of principles, rather it is operating in the service of personal desire – and that rhetoric is both a means to power and the sign of its abuse. Power, in “societies subject to the greatest personages possible,” is univalent – it flows downward through the chain of subjectivity – continuous and absolute (*GB* 1:264). It is practiced by everyone involved through an enactment of their position, but it is most actively practiced through those in politics, law, and law enforcement. Its primary form of punishment is confinement.

Maggie’s approach is not so neatly conceived. One could posit that a primary reason for representing Charlotte’s approach is to render Maggie’s more clearly through contrast. Maggie, as I have noted, finds herself at the end of the first volume subject to, acquiescing in, a policy of immobility – or of restricted mobility. Prior to her awakening in the second volume, Maggie “had carried on her existence in the space left her for circulation, a space that sometimes seemed ample and sometimes narrow” (*GB* 2:3). Policy and policing produce for her not the alternatives of freedom and confinement, but only varying degrees of confinement. Once Maggie is aware that there is a system in place to control her understanding and her behavior, she deploys her own tactics in the effort to regain sole access to her husband’s affections. The product of her figuring and envisioning is not the univalent power that Charlotte’s system is designed to produce. Maggie’s approach is not systematic, and yields the ambivalent condition of agency. It relies on mutable aesthetic sensibilities rather than on a fixed policy. Her approach is guided through management rather than policing. Her art is grounded, not in immutable principles, but in her own integrity as she represents the relations between herself and others.

The two methodologies confront each other directly in the “high fight” on the terrace at Fawns. I have described how Maggie’s figuration of the duel enables her to fool Charlotte into a sense of security – how Charlotte’s view of the larger situation is

consciously stage-managed. A fuller understanding of Charlotte's system can enhance our understanding of how brilliantly Maggie stages the encounter. In fleeing the mutual space, the social space, out into the dark, Maggie activates Charlotte's policing function. She allows herself to be taken back by Charlotte into the large room, which as I have noted, is figured as having "been appointed for some high transaction, some real affair of state," and presents herself as "some poor woman at somebody's proud door" (*GB* 2:246, 247). This move brings out Charlotte's official and judicial reflex, inciting her to show her hand in asking a direct, legally phrased, question: "Have you any ground of complaint of me?" (*GB* 2:247). When Maggie responds by saying, "You must take it from me that I've never thought of you but as beautiful, wonderful and good...Upon my honour," she speaks from within her own paradigm, which does not recognize pre-existing moral and legal strictures. Since Charlotte has been figured into an official mode, she can't understand that though Maggie accuses no one, Maggie knows and intends to act on her knowledge. Within Charlotte's system, and according to the pattern laid down in Edward VII's social circle, to refuse to condemn is to accept. In stage-managing Charlotte's official, juridical and policial activities, Maggie has enveloped, encircled, her rival's entire system with her own art.

Maggie's move is the same as the prefacer's move in the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. The prefacer refigures the terms of the intradiegetic conflict and then encircles that conflict within a larger organic metaphor and within the larger enveloping art as it is practiced in the New York Edition. James may claim that Lambert Strether of *The Ambassadors* is most psychologically like himself, but Maggie Verver most resembles the author as an artist. Maggie's mode of representing and engaging experience is the same as her narrator's and the prefacer's. The figures in *The Golden Bowl* and in the prefaces not only serve functions at the levels of action, narrative and criticism, they link those levels. The mere fact that Maggie's, the

narrator's, and the prefacer's figurations operate in the same way mark them as homologous, which allows conclusions reached in one level to be applied to another. As I have noted, they are also linked through an indeterminacy of attribution – many of the metaphors occupy a space shared by two or more voices from different levels in the narrative structure. A reader can thus “slide” or “slip” across narrative boundaries, retrieving knowledge gained at one level and applying it at another. The borders between action, narration, prefacing, and reading – between character, narrator, author, and reader – as well as between one text and another, one time and another, are thus through the New York Edition represented as crossable. This conception of the literary landscape allows the critic to move more easily from the biographical dimension to the world of the character – to freely note for example, that Henry James gave up the study of law in order to practice his art and to apply that knowledge to what one already has concerning the narrator's affinity with Maggie's methods and his antipathy to Charlotte's. This critic would be following the example of the prefacer who clearly self-identifies as artist, critic, auto-biographer and reader, transposing at will from one dimension to another.

This representation of the various levels of narrative as homologous and connected allows the dénouement of this novel to resonate throughout in an exceptional way. Once Maggie has sealed her triumph and the arrangements for Adam and Charlotte's departure for American City are all made, the four gather for tea.¹⁷ Adam and Maggie leave their spouses together one last time and retreat for a private conversation. They consider their situation, how they arrived where they are, then Maggie turns to her him and says, “It's success, father.” He replies, “It's success” (*GB* 2:366). James is not in the habit of concluding his novels with the

¹⁷ Charlotte, like Madame Merle in *The Portrait of a Lady*, is exiled to America, the country of her birth.

success of the major character. In the Jamesian world, goals are most often thwarted. The best that most of his main characters can hope for is a sort of moral victory. Christopher Newman fails in his attempt to marry Claire de Cintr , Daisy Miller dies in Rome, Isabel Archer fails in her attempt to live a radically free life, the Governess never could be sure of her ghosts, Lambert Strether fails both in his attempt to rescue Chad Newsome from the degenerate French and in his attempt to free himself of his New England inhibitions, and Merton Densher never gets the money or the girl. Here at the end of the final complete novel, however, the girl gets to keep the money, the Prince, her dignity, the house in London and the palazzo in Italy. Only *The Reverberator* – which James said “may be described, beyond any fiction here reproduced as a *jeu d’esprit*” – rivals *The Golden Bowl* in the resounding final success of its main characters (10:v; AN 180). James writes in the preface that as a reader he can effortlessly and docilely follow the author’s lead in this novel, that his own present moves are already synchronized with those made in the fiction. Maggie’s success thus suggests success for “the historian of the matter,” and for the prefacer himself (23:xiii; AN 335). Maggie’s goals are known, but what would success mean for the novel’s author and for the prefacer – the author near the end of his career?

James’s goals as a novelist are many and nuanced. To answer the question in its broader sense would be to travel beyond the circle I have drawn around this study. I will single out two goals expressed in James’s notebooks, correspondence, and most famously, in the prefaces, that are fulfilled in this novel. The first is most clearly expressed in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*. There, as I have noted in my reading of that novel, his judgment of a work depends on “the more or less close connexion of the subject with...some sincere experience” (3:x; AN 45). For James, who led a relatively cloistered existence in hotels and drawing rooms, and whose primary activity was his writing, this means that if he is to represent his own “felt

life,” he will be representing the experience of an artist representing a small social setting (3:x; AN 45). Creating a bildungsroman in which the protagonist learns to use figuration itself – in precisely the same way as the narrator and prefacer – as a tool for modifying social relations does indeed fulfill this criterion. The other goal is also well-known. James seeks to create a unity, or more precisely, unities – between form and function, plot and character, goal and intention, extradiegetic and intradiegetic. Here in this novel figuration, both forms and functions, plot and character, become one in consciousness, and the intradiegetic and extradiegetic method is the same. Though *The Golden Bowl* may not be so neatly formed as *The Ambassadors*, in these important respects it is as successful as Maggie’s enterprise.

The prefacer’s goals are, of course, yet more complex. It is clear, however, that the prefacer is engaged in narrating his authorial life. The narrative he produces is multi-threaded and multi-dimensional, but here in the final preface he makes clear that one of those threads traces a course of development in his writing, beginning with *The American*, “redolent of good intentions baffled by a treacherous vehicle,” and progressing through *The Portrait of a Lady*, to end successfully in “the altogether better literary manners of ‘The Ambassadors’ and ‘The Golden Bowl’” (23:xxi; AN 344). In producing this thread, in itself a kind of künstlerroman, he achieves yet another level of unity, and completes a circle.

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